

## Langton's Classification of Australian Wine IV

27 Jul 2005 by JR

Australia's fine wine auctioneers Langton's, run by Andrew Caillard MW and the brainchild of Stewart Langton of Melbourne, has just published its fourth Classification of Australian Wine (published in full below), dividing 101 Australian saleroom favourites into four divisions, Exceptional, Outstanding, Excellent and Distinguished based on their track record at auction.

To qualify for classification, a wine must have been made in at least 12 vintages and/ or released 10 – 15 in the case of wines qualifying as Exceptional. Langton's claim that the classification is completely objective, based on "sale frequency, intensity and sentiment surrounding its place in the market. Brand definition, wine show medals and independent critical opinion are vectors of sale success, particularly in the sub- premium and premium wine markets. Of course there are many thousands of Australian wines. Of these only the 101 currently Classified wines and about a further 120 Cult and Emerging wines are regularly traded in the ultra- fine Australian wine market place. Langton's formulates its Classification using data from its substantial database of information going back to our first auction sales in the 1980s. Since 2002 our online technology records bidding activity, price realizations and volume of wine sold for all wines and vintages sold at Langton's. We use this unprecedented Australian wine data resource to compile our listings for the Classification."

So the list below does not include very new labels and would not look particularly familiar to those who buy Australian wine exclusively through the more recent specialist importers in the US. It is made up of the proven performers in the secondary fine wine market within Australia, ranked according to the prices they fetch, rather than the money they make for investors.

As Langton's are careful to point out, "the Classification is not based on dollar appreciation or wine investment potential", indeed they are not at all bullish about investment prospects in fine Australian wine at the moment. The market tore away a few years ago, and has since been muddled by one or two outside speculators who set up (now failed) investment schemes in less than blue chip wines.

Although the Classification represents 101 wines, the actual volume of production is relatively small, approximately 400,000 cases total, of which about 30 per cent is probably represented by Penfolds' various bottlings. This compares with, for example, a total of about 150,000 cases of Bordeaux first growths, and an estimated seven million cases of Yellow Tail exported last year.

Of the 89 wines listed in the third Classification in 2000, just 67 have made it in to the fourth. Additions to the top, Exceptional division include Bass Phillip Reserve Pinot Noir, Cullen Diana Madeline Cabernet Sauvignon, Giaconda Chardonnay and Rockford Basket Press Shiraz.

Other new wines in lower ranks include Chris Ringland Shiraz (once Three Rivers), Fox Creek Reserve Shiraz, Greenock Creek Cabernet and Shiraz, Noon Langhorne Creek Shiraz, Torbreck RunRig Shiraz- Viognier, Clonakilla Shiraz- Viognier, Domaine A Cabernet Sauvignon, Grant Burge Meshach Shiraz, Katnook Odyssey Cabernet Sauvignon and Seppelt Great Western Vineyards Show Sparkling Shiraz.

Langton's 2005 Classification of Australian Wine (IV) is published in what they of course call "a beautifully designed poster format". They are selling them at [www.langtons.com.au/maazine/maq\\_cover.asp](http://www.langtons.com.au/maazine/maq_cover.asp).

To download a Q&A on the Classification IV, click [here](#)

The full classification, followed by some seriously useful background on each wine is published below, or can be downloaded [here](#).

### **Exceptional**

PENFOLDS Bin 95 Grange Shiraz, South Australia  
BASS PHILLIP Reserve Pinot Noir, South Gippsland Victoria  
CULLEN Diana Madeline Cabernet- Merlot, Margaret River Western Australia  
GIACONDA Chardonnay, Beechworth Victoria  
HENSCHKE Hill of Grace Shiraz, Eden Valley South Australia  
LEEUWIN ESTATE Art Series Chardonnay, Margaret River Western Australia  
MOSS WOOD Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia  
MOUNT MARY Quintet Cabernet Blend, Yarra Valley Victoria  
PENFOLDS Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon, South Australia  
ROCKFORD Basket Press Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
WENDOUREE Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia

### **Outstanding**

BAROSSA VALLEY ESTATE E & E Black Pepper Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
BASS PHILLIP Premium Pinot Noir, South Gippsland Victoria  
BEST'S Thomson Family Great Western Shiraz, Grampians Victoria  
BROKENWOOD Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz, Hunter Valley New South Wales  
CHRIS RINGLAND Shiraz, Barossa South Australia  
CLARENDON HILLS Astralis Syrah, McLaren Vale South Australia  
CLONAKILLA Shiraz- Viognier, Canberra District New South Wales  
GRANT BURGE Meshach Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
GROSSET Polish Hill Riesling, Clare Valley South Australia  
HARDYS Eileen Hardy Shiraz, South Australia  
HENSCHKE Mount Edelstone Shiraz, Eden Valley South Australia  
JASPER HILL Emily's Paddock Shiraz- Cabernet Franc, Heathcote Victoria  
JASPER HILL Georgia's Paddock Shiraz, Heathcote Victoria  
JIM BARRY The Armagh Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia  
KATNOOK ESTATE Odyssey Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia  
KAY BROTHERS AMERY VINEYARDS Block 6 Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia  
MAJELLA The Mallea Cabernet- Shiraz, Coonawarra South Australia  
MOUNT MARY Pinot Noir, Yarra Valley Victoria  
PARKER COONAWARRA ESTATE Terra Rossa First Growth Cabernet- Merlot, Coonawarra South Australia  
PIERRO Chardonnay, Margaret River Western Australia  
WENDOUREE Cabernet Sauvignon, Clare Valley South Australia  
YALUMBA The Octavius Old Vine Shiraz, Barossa South Australia

### **Excellent**

BANNOCKBURN Serre Pinot Noir, Geelong Victoria  
BINDI Original Vineyard Pinot Noir, Macedon Ranges Victoria  
CAPE MENTELLE Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia  
CORIOLE Lloyd Reserve Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia  
CRAIGLEE Shiraz, Sunbury Victoria  
DALWHINNIE Moonambel Shiraz, Pyrenees Victoria  
D'ARENBERG The Dead Arm Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia  
DE BORTOLI Noble One Botrytis Semillon, Riverina New South Wales  
ELBERTON Command Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
FOX CREEK Reserve Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia  
GIACONDA Pinot Noir, Beechworth Victoria  
GREENOCK CREEK Roennfeldt Road Cabernet Sauvignon, Barossa Valley South Australia  
GREENOCK CREEK Roennfeldt Road Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
GROSSET Watervale Riesling, Clare Valley South Australia  
HENSCHKE Cyril Henschke Cabernet Sauvignon, Eden Valley South Australia  
HOWARD PARK Cabernet, Margaret River- Great Southern Western Australia  
LAKE'S FOLLY White Label Cabernet Blend, Hunter Valley New South Wales  
MCWILLIAM'S Mount Pleasant Lovedale Semillon, Hunter Valley New South Wales  
MOUNT LANGI GHIRAN Langi Shiraz, Grampians Victoria  
NOON Winery Reserve Shiraz, Langhorne Creek South Australia  
PENFOLDS Bin 389 Cabernet- Shiraz, South Australia  
PENFOLDS St. Henri Shiraz, South Australia  
PETALUMA Coonawarra Cabernet- Merlot, Coonawarra South Australia  
PETER LEHMANN Stonewell Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
ST HALLETT Old Block Shiraz, Barossa South Australia  
TAHBILK 1860 Vines Shiraz, Nagambie Lakes Victoria  
TORBRECK RunRig Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia

VASSE FELIX Heytesbury Cabernet Blend, Margaret River- Great Southern Western Australia  
VERITAS Rolf Binder Hanisch Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia  
WENDOUREE Cabernet- Malbec, Clare Valley South Australia  
WENDOUREE Shiraz- Malbec, Clare Valley South Australia  
WENDOUREE Shiraz- Mataro, Clare Valley South Australia  
WYNN'S COONAWARRA ESTATE John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia  
YARRA YERING Dry Red Wine No.1 Cabernet, Yarra Valley Victoria

#### **Distinguished**

BANNOCKBURN Chardonnay, Geelong Victoria  
BANNOCKBURN Pinot Noir, Geelong Victoria  
BASS PHILLIP Estate Pinot Noir, South Gippsland Victoria  
BEST'S Bin No.O Great Western Shiraz, Grampians Victoria  
BOWEN ESTATE Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia  
CHARLES MELTON Nine Popes Shiraz- Grenache- Mourvedre, Barossa Valley South Australia  
CRAWFORD RIVER WINES Riesling, Henty Victoria  
DOMAINE A Cabernet Sauvignon, Coal River Valley Tasmania  
HOUGHTON Jack Mann Frankland River Cabernet Blend, Great Southern Western Australia  
KATNOOK ESTATE Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia  
LEASINGHAM Classic Clare Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia  
LEEWIN ESTATE Art Series Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia  
LINDEMANS Limestone Ridge Vineyard Shiraz- Cabernet, Coonawarra South Australia  
MAJELLA Cabernet, Coonawarra South Australia  
MITCHELTON Print Shiraz, Nagambie Lakes Victoria  
MOUNT MARY Chardonnay, Yarra Valley Victoria  
ORLANDO Lawson's Shiraz, Padthaway South Australia  
ORLANDO St. Hugo Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia  
PENFOLDS Magill Estate Shiraz, Adelaide South Australia  
PETALUMA Piccadilly Valley Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills South Australia  
PETALUMA Hanlin Hill Riesling, Clare Valley South Australia  
PLANTAGENET Mount Barker Shiraz, Great Southern Western Australia  
REDBANK WINERY Sally's Paddock Cabernet- Shiraz, Pyrenees Victoria  
SEPPELT Great Western Vineyards Show Sparkling Shiraz, Grampians Victoria  
SEPPELT St Peters Great Western Vineyards Shiraz, Grampians Victoria  
TIM ADAMS The Aberfeldy Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia  
TYRRELL'S Vat 47 Chardonnay, Hunter Valley New South Wales  
TYRRELL'S Vat 1 Semillon, Hunter Valley New South Wales  
VASSE FELIX Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia  
WOLF BLASS Black Label Cabernet- Shiraz, South Australia  
WYNN'S COONAWARRA ESTATE Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia  
YARRA YARRA VINEYARD The Yarra Yarra Cabernet Sauvignon, Yarra Valley Victoria  
YARRA YERING Dry Red Wine No.2 Shiraz, Yarra Valley Victoria  
YERINGBERG Cabernet Blend, Yarra Valley Victoria

#### **Exceptional**

##### **PENFOLDS Bin 95 Grange Shiraz, South Australia**

Created by Max Schubert in 1951 Penfolds Grange is a beautifully seductive, richly concentrated wine which evokes the spirit of the Australian landscape – its natural affinity with Shiraz and Penfolds remarkable winemaking philosophy. It is a very perfumed, concentrated wine which combines the intensely rich fruit and ripe tannins of Shiraz with the fragrance and complementary nuances of new, fine-grained American oak. Partial barrel fermentation takes place at the tail-end of primary fermentation. It weaves the two elements together producing a 'meaty' complexity and roundness of flavours on the palate. A portion of Cabernet is used in some years to enhance the aromatics and palate structure. Australians from all walks of life are extremely proud of this iconic wine and what it stands for.

Top Vintages: 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1986, 1980, 1976, 1971, 1966, 1963, 1962, 1955, 1953

##### **BASS PHILLIP Reserve Pinot Noir, South Gippsland Victoria**

A madly rare, profoundly intense and exquisitely balanced wine which reflects the nuances of an exceptional vineyard site. The Reserve is made from five rows of 'precocious' Pinot Noir vines in the centre of a closely spaced (9000 vines/ hectare) north-east facing vineyard planted on silty loams. Winemaker Phillip Jones is increasingly using "minimal intervention" principles to achieve a natural balance and optimum flavour development. He believes the difference between good and great Pinot is texture. The unfiltered Reserve, matured for 20 months in new Alliers oak, is a brilliant example of Australian *terroir* showing plenty of concentrated spicy/ black cherry fruit, savoury mocha oak and supple tannins and is widely regarded as Australia's greatest, most consistent and characterful Pinot Noir.

Top Vintages: 2003, 2001, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1994, 1991

##### **CULLEN Diana Madeline Cabernet - Merlot, Margaret River Western Australia**

Vanya Cullen has taken her Cabernet Merlot into the top echelon of Australian Cabernet through dogged determination, curiosity and superb technical skills. The exemplary vineyard site is planted on ancient granitic soils in the central Willyabrup sub-region of Margaret River. Cullen has adopted the principles of biodynamic viticulture to "achieve greater individuality of site through working with nature rather than against it". This estate style is about freshness and complexity, structure and suppleness. The wines have pronounced cassis and cedar aromas with fine beautifully ripe tannins. Earthy, anise, gamy aromas and flavours develop with age. Diane Madeline Cabernet Merlot is named in memory of Di Cullen who established the winery and vineyard with her husband in 1966 and is pure bottled philosophy.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1995, 1994

##### **GIACONDA Chardonnay, Beechworth Victoria**

Rick Kinzbrunner's ethereal Giaconda Chardonnay has emerged as one of Australia's great wines capturing the soul of the Beechworth landscape and the character of an exceptional vineyard site. The low yielding vines are planted unusually on south facing slopes to avoid the full impact of the sun. The lean mineralized granitic loams over decomposed gravel and clay allow both "sustained water release" and naturally regulated vines. Astonishing mastery of "barrel work" brings an extra dimension to his Chardonnay. The wines are very complex with fresh lemon curd, malty chestnut lanolin aromas and flavours. The creamy structure, mineral notes and 'al dente' grip on the palate give plenty of texture and weight. 2003 was not made because of "bushfire smoke damage".

Top Vintages: 2004, 2002, 2000, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1994, 1991, 1990

##### **HENSCHKE Hill of Grace Shiraz, Eden Valley South Australia**

Hill of Grace has a rare pure fruit resonance that captures the warp and woof of an historic single vineyard originally planted in the 1860s. Ancient genetic shiraz vines, many over a 140 years old, are planted on red clay soils overlain by sandy and silty loams interspersed with gravels. The wine speaks profoundly of place and is the quintessential Eden Valley Shiraz. Partial barrel fermentation in a combination of new American and French oak and 18 months maturation bring further complexity and harmony. Hill of Grace is intensely complex with ground coffee/ black cherry/ blackberry aromas and hints of savoury oak. The palate is concentrated and powerful with blackberry/ mocha flavours intertwined with malt/ spicy oak and fine lacy tannins.

Top Vintages: 1999, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1992, 1991, 1990, 1986, 1978

##### **LEEWIN ESTATE Art Series Chardonnay, Margaret River Western Australia**

Purchased by Trish and Denis Horgan, Leeuwin Estate lies just south of the Margaret River township. The Art Series Block 20 vineyard lies on deeply weathered and laterised soils with rocky outcrops of gneiss and ironstone gravels. Pristine Chardonnay fruit characters are preserved throughout vinification. The wine is 100% barrel fermented in selected new French oak and matured in the same barrel for approximately 12 months. These are rare, long-lived, fine-boned Chardonnays with superb fruit definition and clarity. They show a balance between exuberant fruit and savoury complexity. The palate is creamy yet a fine bead of acid cuts a swathe across the palate giving life and incredible length. It develops beautifully with grapefruit/ melon aromas and complex lanolin nuances.

Top Vintages: 2003, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1997, 1996, 1995, 1987

##### **MOSS WOOD Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River, Western Australia**

Moss Wood, located in the Willyabrup sub- district of Margaret River, can boast one of the choicest and most beautiful vineyard sites in Australia. The Cabernet Sauvignon – first vintage 1973 – is regarded as one of Australia's great wines offering elegance, restrained power and site specific aromas and flavours. The wine is extremely perfumed and finely structured with cassis- blackcurrant aromas, hints of cedar and violet. Extended oak aging to 24 months (since 1996) and the introduction of Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Merlot have made the wine deeper in colour, more aromatic and textured. The oak and fruit are very neatly balanced. The wine develops a touch of earth/ demi- glace briar characters on the bouquet and complexity and suppleness on the palate.

Top Vintages: 2001, 1999, 1997, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1992, 1991, 1990, 1987

#### **MOUNT MARY Quintet Cabernet Blend, Yarra Valley, Victoria**

Mount Mary commands a mythical status among wine collectors. Quintet is a Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Merlot and Petit Verdot blend. The vineyard faces due north and captures optimum sunlight during the growing season. New French Oak plays an underlying role in the style. Owing to vine age, the wine has become richer and more complex during the 1990s. It exhibits a purity of fruit, poise and structure found in few Australian Cabernets with cedar and blackcurrant aromas, fine- grained savoury tannins and superb flavour length. Quality is usually outstandingly good, although as a single vineyard wine, the vagaries of vintage can come into play. Quintet resonates an individuality of place and Dr John Middleton's fastidious respect of the landscape.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1991, 1990, 1988, 1986, 1984, 1982, 1979

#### **PENFOLDS Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon, South Australia**

Bin 707 represents the Penfolds House red wine style at its most rich and powerful. The Cabernet fruit is largely drawn from South Australian vineyards in Coonawarra, Padthaway, Barossa Valley (including the famed Block 42 vineyard) and increasingly from Bordertown. Everything about Bin 707 is large scale. Winemakers seek fully ripe fruit with strong flavours derived from partial barrel fermentation and maturation in new American oak hogsheads for a period of 18 months. Bin 707 is immensely concentrated with dark berry/ dark chocolate fruit balanced by well- seasoned new oak, plenty of fruit sweetness and strong but not overwhelming tannins. Bin 707 builds up into a wonderfully complex and interesting wine. The 1970-1975, 1981, 1995 and 2000 vintages were not made.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1991, 1990, 1986, 1983, 1976, 1967, 1966, 1964

#### **ROCKFORD Basket Press Shiraz, Barossa Valley, South Australia**

Robert O'Callaghan's Rockford Basket Press Shiraz encapsulates traditional and contemporary winemaking practice and philosophy and embraces the inherent qualities of old vine Shiraz: the physicality of winemaking where muscle and personal touch transform process into an art- form; the traditional tools of trade (basket press, open fermenter) and the complementary nuances of American and French oak maturation. The Shiraz fruit is sourced from local growers in the Barossa including around Kalimna, Ebenezer, Moppa Springs, the Eden Valley and Central Barossa. The vines are between 60 and 136 years. Rockford Basket Press Shiraz is made in the classic mould with strong, ripe, blackberry and fine chocolate fruit characters, underscored by excellent palate richness, well- seasoned American and French oak and ripe tannins.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1996, 1994, 1991, 1990, 1986

#### **WENDOUREE Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia**

Toy and Lita Brady's spectacularly individual Wendouree Shiraz has remained true to its origins since Alfred Percy Birks planted vines in 1893. It is considered by many as one of Australia's greatest Shirazes. The vineyard is tiny, with low- yielding, beautifully formed old vines, many from the original plantings. Low input viticulture, *laissez faire* winemaking and maturation in about 1/3 new oak allows the wine to speak of place. These are dense, strongly flavoured wines with beautifully intense varietal fruit, massive concentration and a hallmark muscular sinewy tannin structure. The overall mass of fruit sweetness complements the toughness of the wine. Wendouree Shiraz will age for a long period of time maintaining prominent tannin structures but evolving further complexity and interest.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1998, 1991, 1994, 1990, 1989, 1986

#### **Outstanding**

#### **BAROSSA VALLEY ESTATE E & E Black Pepper Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia**

The plush Barossa Valley Estate E&E Black Pepper Shiraz is sourced from some of the best mature and independently dry grown vineyards in the northern Barossa sub- region of Moppa and Ebenezer. With an average age of over 60 years, these vineyards yield fruit of great power and finesse. The wine is made in open headed down fermenters and then aged in a combination of new and one and two year old American and French oak for between 12 and 18 months. The wine is incredibly intense and concentrated with dark choco- berry liquorice fruit, ripe tannins, mid- palate richness and underlying malty oak complexity. With all the structural attributes for medium to long term cellaring, it has very strong currency in the secondary market.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1988

#### **BASS PHILLIP Premium Pinot Noir, Gippsland Victoria**

While not quite as concentrated or powerful as the Reserve, the premium Pinot Noirs have beautiful, black cherry, floral and gamey aromas, supple, velvety tannins, underlying smoky oak and great flavour length. The fruit is sourced from the low cropping four hectare north- east facing vineyard at Leongatha. Philip Jones' philosophy is to "allow nature to drive the viticulture and wine making processes". Natural yeasts, no filtration and extended time on lees are all par for the course. The wine is aged in French Alliers oak for 12 to 18 months depending on vintage. Their "hidden power" is revealed after around five years of bottle age. A Cuvee Rare, which was aged in barrel for an extra six months, was produced 2001.

Top Vintages: 2003, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1992

#### **BEST'S Thomson Family Reserve Shiraz, Grampians - Great Western Victoria**

The particularly rare Best's Thomson Family Reserve Shiraz is one of Victoria's greatest wines and represents a window to Australia's winemaking past. Like Henschke Hill of Grace and Penfolds Block 42 in the Barossa Valley, the Best's Concongella Vineyard 1860s plantings at Great Western belong to Australia's rich heritage of ancient genetic and pre- phylloxera vineyards. The fifteen rows of dry grown Shiraz vines, well over 140 years old, are the source material for the Thomson Family. It is a rich, generous wine with brilliant blackberry meaty fruit underpinned by cedar oak and gravelly tannins. The wine is open- fermented in small 'tubs' and then matured in a 50/50 combination of new and old American oak for approximately 24 months.

Top Vintages: 1998, 1997, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1992

#### **BROKENWOOD Graveyard Vineyard Shiraz, Hunter Valley New South Wales**

The sheer class of the thirty- something Graveyard vineyard – planted on heavy red clay over loam soils – is shown when the inevitable February rains set in. The topsoil is very mean and shallow forcing the vines to struggle resulting in very low yields. The consistency of quality across vintage reflects a remarkable wine making philosophy, attitude and vineyard character. The wine is partially barrel fermented and then matured in a combination of French and American oak *barriques* for a period of around 14 months. Young elemental Graveyard shows ginger bread, blackberry aniseed fruit, plenty of savoury oak and floral/ herb garden notes. The opulent gamey/ French polish characters develop with time bringing a rich palimpsest of aromas and flavours.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2000, 1999, 1996, 1994, 1991, 1986

#### **CHRIS RINGLAND (THREE RIVERS) Shiraz, Barossa South Australia**

This is an utterly gorgeous wine that seduces and bombards the senses, suggesting a deep emotional connection between winemaker and vineyard landscape. The "unusually thick skinned" Shiraz is sourced from Chris Ringland's dry grown vineyard planted originally in 1910 on shallow skeletal granitic sandy loams over underlying clay on the edge of the Barossa Valley (but technically in Eden Valley). The wines are 'painstakingly hand made' in open fermenters and regularly plunged to extract colour, flavour and tannins. After basket pressing, fermentation is completed in 100% new French oak hogsheads. A period of up to 40 months oak maturation follows to achieve optimum complexity and balance between oak and fruit. The very limited release Three Rivers is about opulence, flamboyance, richness and concentration.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1992, 1991

#### **CLARENDON HILLS Astralis Syrah, McLaren Vale - Clarendon South Australia**

The exotic, highly perfumed, concentrated, massively structured, rich and complex single vineyard Clarendon Hills Astralis ("pertaining to the stars") derives from 35 to 70 year old dry grown vines planted on a complex mixture of clay, ironstone and gravelly soils. A *laissez-faire* wine making philosophy is central to style allowing the wine to speak of its origins. Fermentation takes place with natural yeasts in an open stainless steel tank. The wine is matured in 100% new French oak *barrisques* for around 18 months before bottling without filtration. This is a contemporary Australian classic with strong regional definition and long term cellaring potential. In recent times it has transcended the cult wine scene bringing extra dimension to the Australian ultra-fine market.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 1998, 1999, 1996, 1995, 1994

#### **CLONAKILLA Shiraz- Viognier, Canberra District New South Wales**

The south facing 12 acre vineyard – located in the sleepy picturesque and biscuit- coloured Murrumbateman landscape – is planted on sandy clay loams over friable clays. The need to be different during the 1980s boutique winery boom moved Clonakilla away from the mainstream in 1986 and into the unproven but tantalising marriage potential and astounding nuances of Viognier as a co- factor in the vinification of Shiraz. This is a supreme example of where generosity of spirit as much as vineyard site and winemaking practice inextricably weaves through the wine. The perfumed, sensuous, Clonakilla style is essentially about "fruit leading the wood". It is a highly aromatic wine with ginger, white pepper, apricot fruit, some savoury French oak nuances and fine slinky/ boney tannins.

Top Vintages: 2003, 2002, 2001, 1998, 1996, 1995, 1994

#### **GRANT BURGE Meshach Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia**

Fifth generation Barossa winemaker, Grant Burge draws upon a rich resource of vineyards particularly in the Central and Southern parts of the Barossa Valley and in the Eden Valley. He named Meshach Shiraz after his great- grandfather, who arrived in South Australia in 1855. This is not strictly a single vineyard wine although a strong portion of the fruit is sourced from the 80- year- old Filsell vineyard planted on deep alluvial soils near Lyndoch. The wine is vinified in open headed down fermenters but completes fermentation in mostly new American oak hogsheads. Meshach is a highly concentrated, generous Barossa style with a ripe, dense palate packed with fruit, pronounced tannins and seasoned by American oak. Great potential for longevity.

Top Vintages: 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990

#### **GROSSET Polish Hill Riesling, Clare Valley South Australia**

Established in 1966 Polish Hill Vineyard is named after the nearby Hill River Settlement established by Polish immigrants in the 1840s. The fully mature low- vigour vines are planted on a U- shaped ridge formation on poor shaley slightly acidic soils with underlying slate and a topsoil crust of clay interspersed with shale. Vintage takes place in early April, normally a few weeks later than Watervale. The free- run juice is cold settled for four days before being yeasted and fermented in closed stainless steel fermenters. The wines have incredible perfume and fruit purity, the lime/ floral fruit profile balanced by a fine cut of acidity. This long- lived beautifully aromatic and concentrated wine does much to define great Clare Valley Riesling.

Top Vintages: 2003, 2002, 2001, 1999, 1997, 1996, 1995, 1990, 1981

#### **HARDYS Eileen Hardy Shiraz, South Australia**

Hardy's Eileen Hardy was first released in 1970. The early vintages were made from Cabernet Sauvignon. It is now exclusively made from the best parcels of dry grown Shiraz fruit sourced principally from McLaren Vale but also from Clare Valley, Padthaway and Frankland River in Western Australia. Fermentation takes place in small open concrete fermenters which allow the winemaker to bring out the natural fruit characters of Shiraz. Since the 1995 vintage, the wine has progressively moved to being matured for approximately 18 to 20 months in 100% French oak. This is a very opulent perfumed wine with gamey blackberry/ liquorice intensity, well integrated new oak and fine pronounced tannins. This "living breathing beast" reflects a strong house winemaking ethos and exceptional vineyard resources.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1991, 1990

#### **HENSCHKE Mount Edelstone Shiraz, Eden Valley South Australia**

Thickened by time and slumped by the weight of age the Mount Edelstone Vineyard Shiraz (planted around 1912) is a study of contrasting light, shade, flaws and perfection. The wines evoke the magical *puissance* of vineyard provenance and a distinctive atmosphere of nature and nurture. Mount Edelstone is one of Australia's great single vineyards not only because it is able to make outstanding wine but also because it remains "true to its origin". It is a benchmark Eden Valley wine. Over the last twenty years it has become a cornerstone of the ultra- fine Australian wine market. This much loved wine with its pure blackberry fruit and elegant structure attracts an astonishing volume of interest from collectors and wine enthusiasts.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 1999, 1991, 1990, 1986, 1971

#### **JASPER HILL Emily's Paddock Shiraz- Cabernet Franc, Heathcote Victoria**

The un- irrigated, insanely low yielding 3.2 hectare Emily's Paddock, planted with Shiraz and a few rows of Cabernet Franc, lies on the slopes of the Great Dividing Range. The Cambrian derived soils of friable red brown gravelly loams run in a unique thin north- south non- continuous strip between two parallel fault lines. These are well drained soils with high levels of iron and good water holding properties. A *laissez-faire* winemaking approach is central to the style. During fermentation the wine is regularly pumped over to achieve supple tannins structures. The wine is matured for 14 months in a mixture of new and old French oak (mostly Alliers oak). Emily's Paddock shows power and refinement, with ripe fruit matching well- handled oak.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 2000, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1994, 1992, 1991, 1990, 1988, 1986, 1983

#### **JASPER HILL Georgia's Paddock Shiraz, Heathcote Victoria**

The un- irrigated, low vigour Georgia's Paddock is planted with 12 hectares of Shiraz. After vinification the wine is matured for 14 months in new (around 20%) and old French and American oak. Georgia's Paddock is packaged with a red label, a reminder of a devastating bush fire in 1987. Plush, exotic fruit, underlying oak, richness on the palate, pronounced tannin and fruit sweetness make this an obvious cellaring style. Winemaker Ron Laughton says, "Our production levels are as finite as any other producer and may suffer the vagaries of nature – two severe droughts in 1983 and 1995 and a bushfire in 1987 are extreme examples, but as farmers we philosophically accept that Nature is far more powerful than mere mortal vignerons".

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1994, 1991, 1990, 1988, 1987

#### **JIM BARRY The Armagh Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia**

The Armagh Shiraz is a powerfully compressed Australian Shiraz style which explodes with aroma and flavour. The Armagh vineyard – elevated at 400 metres and established on black alluvial soils over sandy gravels – was named after the nearby settlement of Armagh established by Irish settlers around 1859. It was planted in 1968 by Jim Barry with Shiraz clones originally sourced from Israel. Vinification takes place in open top fermenters with regular auto plunging. The wine is matured in heavily toasted new American and French oak for 12 to 14 months. Jim Barry Armagh Shiraz is an intense, plush, concentrated, essence- of- Clare, Shiraz style. The oak, particularly in classic years, is hidden behind curtains of deep, ripe, intense fruit and extraordinarily fine, structured tannins.

Top Vintages: 1999, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1991, 1990, 1989

#### **KATNOOK ESTATE Odyssey Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia**

The best selected parcels of small flavour intense Cabernet fruit – from specific vineyard rows planted on rich clay loams over a thick hard layer of limestone – are used for Katnook Estate's concentrated and powerful Odyssey Cabernet Sauvignon. This highly prized Coonawarra wine has emerged as a benchmark 'essence of Coonawarra' style with beautifully intense pure blackcurrant aromas, mocha oak complexity and plush chocolaty flavours. After vinification in 'headed down' fermenters maturation takes place over approximately 36 to 40 months in 100 % new French oak. Some parcels are "double oaked" to increase flavour complexity. Winemaker Wayne Stehbins describes the overall style as "fruit richness and elegance". Odyssey has established proven cellaring potential and has a very keen secondary market following.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1991

#### **KAY BROTHERS Amery Vineyards Block 6 Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia**

Block 6 Shiraz vineyard was planted from cuttings off Hardy's Tintara Vineyard in 1892 by Herbert and Frederick Kay. Four acres of the original plantings remain. Planted on the relatively fertile mosaic of red loams, heavy clays and gravelly alluvial soils, Block 6 was originally a "pumpkin patch" of old bush vines. Since 1987 the entire low- yielding vineyard was trellised in a north- south direction. The wine is made in traditional 'headed down' open fermenters originally built by the Kay Brothers in 1895/1896. After fermentation the wine is drained and basket pressed into mostly new American and some new Balkan oak for a maturation period of around 28 months. This is a very powerful, concentrated cellaring style with plenty of fruit richness.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 1998, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1992, 1990

#### **MAJELLA The Mallea Cabernet Shiraz, Coonawarra South Australia**

The gorgeously concentrated, immensely complex and seductive Majella Mallea Cabernet Shiraz highlights the compelling nuances of multi varietal blending, utterly superb vineyard resources and Bruce Gregory's intuitive winemaking and selection. The original 6 acre Shiraz vineyard was established in 1968. Since 1970 extensive plantings of Cabernet, Shiraz and Merlot have followed. Majella's Mallea (a local aboriginal word for 'green field') was first made in 1996. Rigorous fruit selection, batch vinification in headed down static fermenters, partial barrel fermentation and 22 months in new, tightly grained French oak are essential elements of wine making philosophy. This strong regionally defined wine shows intense mocha- berry aromas, ripe tannins, savoury oak and meaty complexity; reflective of a remarkable generosity and spirit of place.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996

#### **MOUNT MARY Pinot Noir, Yarra Valley Victoria**

Mount Mary is a vanguard producer of Australian Pinot Noir. The low yielding vineyard, planted in 1972 by Doctor John Middleton, is almost 12.5 hectares and is planted on grey soils (sandy clay loams overlying degenerating Silurian shales). Only 10% of the Mount Mary vineyard is devoted to Pinot Noir. The grapes are de- stalked prior to fermentation and the wines see very little new French oak (rarely above 10%). The young wines show strong, varietal, strawberry/ cherry aromas and a supple evenly proportioned palate. This wine, controversial among some critics, is hugely favoured by collectors. This essentially fruit driven wine will build up complexity and interest over time, its track record at auction illustrating that point.

Top Vintages: 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1992, 1991, 1990, 1986

#### **PARKER COONAWARRA ESTATE Terra Rossa First Growth Cabernet Blend, Coonawarra South Australia**

Established by the Late John Parker in 1985, Parker Coonawarra Estate is owned by Doug and Anne Rathbone of Yering Station fame. The 50- acre vineyard – predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon with minor plantings of Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc – is located at the southern end of Coonawarra and is planted on classic terra rossa over limestone soils. Terra Rossa First Growth is vinified along traditional Bordelais lines with extended 30 day maceration and maturation in a combination of tightly- grained new and used French oak for 20 to 24 months. A little American oak is used for the Merlot component. First Growth, made by the highly skilled Pete Bissell, is a brilliantly seductive wine with unbelievable depth of fruit, balance and structure.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1988

#### **PIERRO Chardonnay, Margaret River Western Australia**

Pierro Vineyard lies in the central Willyabrup sub region of Margaret River. The fully mature 'Gin Gin' clone Chardonnay vines are closely spaced which increases relative humidity. The vineyard is very stony; at night the heat radiates back into the clusters of Chardonnay effectively burning off excessive levels of malic acid. Low levels of malic acid in the Chardonnay fruit means that the complex aromas and flavours derive from malo- lactic fermentation do not smother fruit definition. The wine is vinified in Burgundian fashion with barrel fermentation in new French oak, lees stirring (*battonage*) and lees contact. Doctor Mike Peterkin is able to combine a fastidious attention to detail with a relaxed approach. Pierro Chardonnay possesses incredible intensity, generosity, complexity and concentration.

Top Vintages: 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1996

#### **WENDOUREE Cabernet Sauvignon, Clare Valley South Australia**

Wendouree Cabernet Sauvignon derives from the cool central and western areas of the historic Wendouree vineyard. The cooler central block with its smaller berries is known for its "spicy characters and very firm almost astringent tannins". The western side brings "floral" notes and a softer structure. Consultant winemaker Stephen George – together with Lita and Tony Brady – make a wine that profoundly articulates the individual character of this unique and important vineyard site. After vinification in open fermenters, the wine completes fermentation and remains in stainless steel until November before maturation in new (about 25%) and used French oak for 12 months. This is a very muscular cellaring style with dark chocolate mint fruit characters and fine sinewy tannins.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1991, 1990, 1989, 1986

#### **YALUMBA The Octavius Old Vine Shiraz, Barossa South Australia**

The remarkably individual and generous Octavius Old Vine Shiraz is made from a selection of aged Shiraz vineyards scattered across the Barossa. Most were planted as bush vines between the turn of the century and WWII, the oldest vineyard planted in 1901. The wine combines the perfumed and pure fruit aromas of the Eden Valley and the concentration, texture and ripeness of Barossa Valley Shiraz. Vinification takes place in open topped 6-8 tonne fermenters. While early vintages were matured in 100% new small American Missouri oak (approx 100 litre) octaves, the wine is now aged for 18-20 months in 50% new American oak octaves, 10% new French oak *barriques* and the balance in one year old French and American hogsheads.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1990

#### **Excellent**

#### **BANNOCKBURN Serré Pinot Noir, Geelong Victoria**

The utterly gorgeous, complex and finely textured Bannockburn Serré Pinot Noir derives from a special 1.2 hectare vineyard planted at Bannockburn in 1986. The narrow rows, low trellising and close- planted vines (9,000/ hectare) "restricts crop levels to mirror those of grand cru Burgundy". Serré is a French term meaning close or tight fitting. Increased competition between vines results in deeper subsoil root penetration and better access to nutrients and moisture. The low trellising system allows the grape bunches to hang close to the ground – the fruit ripens evenly and benefits from the warmth radiated from the top soil. Serré is made using traditional Burgundian wine making practices. The wine is matured in Alliers and Vosges *barriques* for 14 months before bottling without filtration.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1995, 1994

#### **BINDI Original Vineyard Pinot Noir, Macedon Ranges Victoria**

The Bindi vineyard, on the slopes of Mount Gisborne at the heel of the Great Dividing Range, was established by engineer Bill Dhillon in 1988. Winemaker Michael Dhillon is fluent in contemporary wine philosophy. He talks about making wines that are "ethereal and seductive" rather than just "satisfying and chunky" and that Bindi's soils "have the strength of character to talk through the wine." The protected original vineyard – elevated at around 500 metres – lies on shattered quartz over alluvial silts and top soil (mostly sandy grey loams over clay). Yields are very low. Wine making is "non- interference – but not uncontrolled". Maturation takes place in around 20% to 30% new French oak. The wines have great "perfume, harmony and elegance".

Top Vintages: 2001, 2000, 1998, 1997, 1996

#### **CAPE MENTELLE Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia**

Cape Mentelle Cabernet Sauvignon – a single vineyard wine – enjoyed impressive beginnings, with the highly prized Melbourne Wine Show Jimmy Watson Trophies for both the 1982 and 1983 vintages. The Walcliffe Vineyard, planted by founder David Hohnen between 1970 and 1973, is located in the cooler southern sub- region of Margaret River. The vines – essentially dry grown – are anchored in gravel laterite soils derived from decomposed ironstone over gravel/ clay subsoils. After fermentation it is matured for around 21 months in a combination of new (30%) and of French oak barrels from Nevers, Alliers and Tronçais. This marvelously concentrated but muscular Margaret River Cabernet is a benchmark style with cedar/ mocha/ blackcurrant fruit characters and chocolaty/ sinewy tannin structure. A top notch Margaret River Cabernet.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1999, 1995, 1994, 1992, 1991, 1983, 1982

#### **CORIOLE Lloyd Reserve Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia**

Coriole Lloyd Reserve Shiraz is sourced from a single vineyard planted in 1919. This east facing site on deep clay soils is located in the curvaceous landscape known by McLaren Vale locals as the "Seaview area". Vinification takes place in concrete and steel open fermenters. Fermentation is completed in barrel. The wine is matured for 16 and 18 months in a combination of new and old American and French oak. Coriole Lloyd Reserve Shiraz, a traditional but modern classic, is a robust but beautifully balanced style. The wines have intense ripe blackberry/ black olive aromas and meaty complexity with plenty of palate richness, fruit sweetness and texture. These wines are deceptively forward when young but develop for the medium to long term.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1992, 1991, 1990

#### **CRAIGLEE Shiraz, Sunbury Victoria**

"Any site anywhere in the world that can produce a wine that lasts for 100 years is worth being replanted," said John Brown of Milawa fame after a cache of 1872 Craiglee Sunbury Shiraz was found buried at the winery in the 1950s. The 10 hectare vineyard – located on alluvial sands over river stones – is now over thirty five years old. Vinification takes place in open cement fermenters. A small batch is partially barrel fermented. Maturation follows in new and old French and American oak for between 12 and 18 months. The wine is tightly structured with earthy, pepper, raspberry black olive characters and firm tannins; with age becoming more earthy, complex and loose- knit with softer tannins.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1997, 1994, 1990

#### **DALWHINNIE Shiraz, Pyrenees Victoria**

Dalwhinnie Shiraz is a seductive, balanced wine with intense blackberry spice fruit, fine tannins and earthy/ meaty regional nuances. The gentle sloping amphitheatre- like Dalwhinnie vineyard – first planted in 1976 – lies quartz and decomposed slatey soils over friable clays; the initial design and layout provided by David Hohnen of Cape Mentelle fame. This is a particularly well drained low- yielding vineyard. At harvest the vineyard is triaged at varying ripeness levels to achieve a broader flavour spectrum. The winemaking philosophy is in evolution, extended maceration and open fermenters are used to improve flavour complexity. After pressing off in a traditional basket press the wine is matured for up to 16 months in a combination of new and used American and French oak.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 2000, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1994, 1991

#### **D'ARENBERG The Dead Arm Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia**

The richly concentrated Dead Arm Shiraz, named after a fungal disease, derives from "truncated, gap- toothed" old vines dating back to 1912. The dry grown vineyards, on prime but "poor" McLaren Vale dirt, benefit from cool summer coastal breezes and strong early evening gully winds which funnel down from the Willunga Hills. The wine is virtually 'whole- bunch' vinified in wax- lined and stainless steel headed down open fermenters. D'Arneberg still practices foot treading to achieve optimum but gentle extraction. The wine is pressed off in Vintage 'Coq' and 'Bromley & Tregoning' presses originally built in 1860. The wine is partially barrel fermented before further maturation in American and French oak for around 20-22 months. A blockbuster style.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1991

#### **DE BORTOLI Noble One Botrytis Semillon, Riverina New South Wales**

The Riverina district – which often enjoys a humid autumn – is susceptible to botrytis cinerea, also known as noble rot. As the mould grows, hyphae (filaments) shrivel the fruit, concentrating the juice, increasing viscosity and imparting new flavours. The spores need approximately 10 hours of humidity for mould to develop. The vineyards, located near Yenda and Bilbul, are planted on medium to heavy clay loams and are managed to ensure a high level of humidity between the vines to promote botrytis. The best sites are found in 'sinks' where fogs hang around. The highly viscous and sweet juice is first settled and then fermented with specially selected yeasts. The wine is matured in tightly grained French oak puncheons for 12 months.

Top Vintages: 2001, 2000, 1999, 1996, 1994, 1990, 1988, 1982

#### **ELDERTON Command Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia**

These days Elderton Command Shiraz derives from a single century- old vineyard located on the banks of the Para River at Nuriootpa in the centre of the Barossa Valley. The deep alluvial soils underlain by limestone are washed with silts when the river- creek breaks its banks. The wine is vinified in traditional headed down open fermenters and regularly plunged and pumped. Fermentation is completed in new French (35%) and American oak (65%). After maturation for 12 to 18 months in new oak, the wine is aged in two and three year old oak for a further 18 months. The well balanced and refined Command is typified by raspberry, blackberry meaty dark chocolate fruit, pronounced tannin structure and integrated oak.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1994, 1990, 1988

#### **FOX CREEK Reserve Shiraz, McLaren Vale South Australia**

The "solid, strong and flavoursome" Fox Creek Reserve Shiraz draws fruit from the Estate's increasingly impressive 8 acre Willows Block planted in 1989 and Short and Long Row Vineyards planted in 1993. Some old vine material from local growers is also used. Bay of Biscay cracking clays which dry out in the summer have excellent moisture holding capacity in winter. The wine is vinified in open fermenters. Around 10-20% is barrel fermented in French oak to achieve more complexity. Early vintages comprised significant use of American oak. The philosophy of "preserving fruit without smothering with oak" and achieving "intensity and finesse" has led to a longer maturation period of 16-19 months in new and used French oak.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 1998, 1997

#### **GIACONDA Pinot Noir, Beechworth Victoria**

The highly scented, fleshy and sinewy Giaconda Pinot Noir captures the heart and soul of its Beechworth *terroir*. The elevated vineyard, which overlooks the vast expanse of the King Valley, is planted on well- draining mineralized granitic loams over decomposed gravels and soil- moisture holding clays. Rick Kinzbrunner (who follows organic principles) says "there is a natural almost mysterious feel about this landscape. I work the vineyard by instinct allowing the personality of the vines to show through." Vinification follows traditional Burgundian techniques. Attention to detail, especially barrel work, results in one of Australia's better Pinot Noirs. Production will become increasingly minute as Kinzbrunner zeroes in on the best parcels of fruit to achieve more intensity and complexity.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1994, 1992

#### **GREENOCK CREEK Roennfeldt Road Cabernet, Barossa Valley South Australia**

The opulently structured and chocolaty Roennfeldt Road Cabernet Sauvignon is matured for 36 months in new French oak. Winemaker Michael Waugh has a fairly *laissez- faire* attitude to maturation leaving the barrels bunged at 1 o'clock and no topping up. He is totally self- trained and hasn't much time for "techno- crap". However his creative energy and inherent winemaking skills together with exceptional vineyard sites and superbly concentrated fruit combine to create something new and unique to the Barossa. Alas production, as with the Roennfeldt Shiraz, is limited to just a few barrels fuelling a 'cult psychology' among buyers. Michael Waugh belongs to an increasingly large school of Barossa winemakers who seek to capture the personality of single vineyard sites.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996

#### **GREENOCK CREEK Roennfeldt Road Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia**

The scattered dry grown Greenock Creek vineyards, located near Seppeltsfield, lie on varying soils ranging from red loamy soils to alluvial, bordering on, clay soils in a pocket undulation cut by a dry creek bed. The massively concentrated and opulent Roennfeldt Road Shiraz, which draws fruit from vines planted in the 1950s, is vinified in open sunk slate fermenters and regularly plunged over. The free run wine and pressings are kept entirely separate to increase blending options. The wines are drained and pressed in Hypac basket presses into a combination of new and used oak, depending on the vineyard parcel. The Roennfeldt Road Shiraz is matured for 36 months in new American oak hogseeds.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996

#### **GROSSET Watervale Riesling, Clare Valley South Australia**

If the Polish Hill is power and intensity, the sub- regional Watervale Riesling resonates pure fruit with mouthwatering slatey acidity. The fruit derives from a hill top site with a high exposure to sunlight. The thin topsoils are red loams interspersed with shale over limestone and the vines are deeply rooted into slate/ shale bedrock. The wine is vinified in the same manner as the Polish Hill Riesling. No pressings are used in the wine. Grosset says, "making Riesling is the purest form of wine- making our options are very restricted. No oak, no malo- lactic and usually no extended lees contact or grape- skin contact is employed. A disciplined winemaking approach is needed to retain the inherent fruit characters and expression of individual vineyard site."

Top Vintages: 2003, 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1997, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1991, 1990, 1989, 1982

#### **HENSCHKE Cyril Henschke Cabernet Sauvignon, Eden Valley South Australia**

This single vineyard Cabernet was named after the Late Cyril Henschke who purchased this Eden Valley property in the 1970s. It now comprises small elements of Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Soils are well drained with sandy loams over gravel and patches of clay. Early vintages were partially barrel fermented and matured in American oak. Nowadays the wine – after vinification in headed down open fermenters – completes fermentation and 18 months maturation in 100% new French oak: mainly Vosges, Alliers and Berce. The style has come through quite an evolution – the wines show more finesse and balance than ever before. Cyril Henschke Cabernet is a very perfumed wine with intense pure blackcurrant cedar meaty characters, fine grained tannins and savoury/ vanillin oak complexity.

Top Vintages: 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1988, 1986, 1984

#### **HOWARD PARK Cabernet, Margaret River - Great Southern Western Australia**

Howard Park Cabernet- Merlot is a Western Australian blend sourced from vineyards on "gravelly mean soils" in the Lower Great Southern and Margaret River. Some of Howard Park's best Cabernet is sourced from the Spring View Vineyard located on the southern "rain shadow" side of the Porongurup Ranges and is noted for being "very complex, perfumed and textural". The Wildwood road vineyard on the northern edge of Margaret River brings chocolaty aromas and mid palate richness. The wine is batch vinified in open static fermenters before extended maceration and maturation in fine grained Seguin Moreau French oak for a period of 24 months. Opulence without soupiness, restraint with underlying power and concentration are all hallmarks of the Howard Park style.

Top Vintages: 1999, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1992

#### **LAKE'S FOLLY White Label Cabernet Blend, Hunter Valley New South Wales**

Established by Dr Max Lake in 1963, Lake's Folly was one of Australia's first boutique wineries. The 'crisis of expectations' is an ironic description for his once over- famous wines. The Cabernet however is back in form illustrating the inscrutable fact that the weather in the winemaker's mind is as critical as vineyard site. The vineyard is located on a combination of volcanic and alluvial soils. The Cabernet is open fermented and then matured for approximately 12 months in a combination of new and used French oak *barriques*, the proportion of new oak ranging from 1/3 to a 1/2 depending on vintage. The Cabernet is an elegant perfumed style with violet, blackcurrant, earthy characters, fine- grained tannins and underlying savoury oak.

Top Vintages: 2001, 2000, 1998, 1991, 1988, 1972

#### **MCWILLIAM'S Lovedale Semillon, Hunter Valley New South Wales**

The Lovedale Vineyard was planted in 1946 by pioneer winemaker Maurice O'Shea. The locals used to say the sandy soils are so poor here that "rabbits needed to bring along a tucker box to survive". These lean acidic soils are elemental to the long- lived, fine- boned Lovedale Semillons, first made in 1954. The Semillon is picked relatively early, resulting in wines with relatively low alcohols and naturally high acidities. The austere young wines are incredibly pale with floral/ lemon curd/ herb garden aromas and flavours, a core of fruit sweetness and fine mineral acid cut. An extraordinary metamorphosis takes place as the wine develops in bottle. The colour deepens to gold and toasty/ lanolin/ oilskin characters, richness and flavour complexity emerge.

Top Vintages: 2001, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1986, 1984

#### **MOUNT LANGI GHIRAN Langi Shiraz, Grampians Victoria**

The elegant and beautifully proportioned Langi Shiraz is a Victorian classic. Originally planted in the late 1960s, the spectacular vineyard lies at the base of the 540 metre cliff- face of Mt Langi Ghiran. The well ventilated site is trellised to an arched cane system which promotes an open canopy. Vinification takes place in shallow open fermenters. The wine is aged in a combination of American and French oak *barriques* and puncheons for approximately 12 months before bottling. In a cool vintage, the wine shows distinct white pepper/ raspberry aromas and flavours. In warm years it can have intense raspberry/ blackberry/ cracked pepper aromas but a ripe, elegantly structured, palate. In a great vintage it can outclass almost everything.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1995, 1992

#### **NOON Reserve Shiraz, Langhorne Creek South Australia**

Made by Master of Wine Drew Noon, the exquisite and highly prized Reserve Shiraz is sourced from a Langhorne Creek vineyard planted in 1962 on deep alluvial clay loams. Earlier bottlings of this wine (from the same Borrett Family "20 rows" block vineyard) were simply known as Noon's Traditional Red. The wine is fermented in small open vats and pressed using traditional basket presses. Maturation is flexible "to stay in harmony with each season". The wine is usually aged in oak for around 18 months in a combination of (30-40%) new and old American and French oak barrels and large old casks. This is an amazingly perfumed, deeply concentrated and opulent wine which attracts a worldwide interest from collectors.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 1999, 1998

#### **PENFOLDS Bin 389 Cabernet - Shiraz, South Australia**

Penfolds Bin 389 (first vintage 1960) was originally a single vineyard wine drawing fruit from the now defunct Auldana Vineyard. Nowadays it is a multi district South Australian blend. While regional characters are intertwined, it is ultimately the personality and the structure of the fruit that really matters. Some components of the blend complete fermentation in barrel to enhance complexity, richness and integration of new oak. Bin 389 is matured in a combination of new (20-30%) and one and two year old (70-80%) American hogsheads for 18 months and has developed a strong identity for its consistency, reliability and value. This classic Australian wine with all its ripe fruit, richness and generosity is much loved by wine collectors.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1991, 1990, 1986, 1976, 1971, 1964, 1961

#### **PENFOLDS St Henri Shiraz, South Australia**

This traditional 'maturation style' (first vintage 1953) is nowadays a multi district South Australian blend. A small proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon provides firmness and structure. The St Henri style has evolved over the last decade without compromising John Davoren's original intentions: "Potential parcels of fruit which have the aromatics, concentration and structure are identified at a much earlier stage. Winemaking has also been tweaked; the wine shows brighter fruit definition and more composed tannins." The young wines which make 'the cut' are matured for between 15 and 18 months in large 2000 litre old oak casks. Penfolds St Henri is based on fruit definition and flavour, but the absence of new oak – so prevalent in contemporary Australian Shiraz – sets it apart.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2001, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1986, 1976, 1971

#### **PETALUMA Coonawarra Cabernet - Merlot, Coonawarra South Australia**

Petaluma's The Evans vineyard was planted in 1969 to Cabernet and Shiraz and the early Petalumas were Cabernet Shiraz blends. The risky, brutal and visionary conversion over to Merlot led to mixed results during the 1980s. However the wines found a strong Coonawarra 'voice' in the 1990s. The low cropping vineyard is 'hand pruned, canopy trained, crop moderated, handpicked and dry land managed amongst a sea of mechanised convenience managed vineyards," says winemaker Brian Croser. The wines are made in closed headed down fermenters and roto- fermenters and then matured for 20 months in French oak. Petaluma Coonawarra is a refined style reflecting the uniqueness of vineyard site. They are elegantly structured with restrained blackcurrant, pastille aromas, fine- grained tannins and subtle savoury oak.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1988, 1981\*, 1979\* (\*Cabernet Shiraz)

#### **PETER LEHMANN Stonewell Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia**

The heroic Peter Lehmann and his modest chief winemaker Andrew Wigan, through inventiveness and imagination, profoundly intertwine traditional thought and modern winemaking practice. Peter Lehmann Stonewell, one of the great contemporary Barossa Shirazes, is derived from 14 low yielding Shiraz vineyards located in the drier sub- districts of the Barossa including Stonewell, Marananga, Greenock, Kalinna and Ebenezer. The wine is made using traditional methods followed by maturation in mostly French and American oak hogsheads. Earlier vintages saw higher proportions of American oak. The powerful, dense and fruit sweet Stonewell shows plenty of black liquorice, dark chocolate aromas, structured tannins, well- seasoned oak flavours and tremendous flavour length. This wine remains hugely undervalued when compared to other Barossa classics.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990

#### **ST HALLETT Old Block Shiraz, Barossa South Australia**

St Hallett Old Block derives from 'old vine' vineyards in the Barossa including the original Old Block Vineyard planted in 1912 and the sub regions of Seppeltsfield, Ebenezer, Moculta and Eden Valley. Soils range from red brown earth over clay on the Barossa floor to thin eroded skeletal soils over ironstone in the Eden Valley. Vines age from 80 to 110 years old. Winemaking philosophy fully captures the nuances of individual sites; each vineyard parcel is vinified separately in open 'headed down' fermenters. Maturation takes place in new and used American and French oak for 18-20 months. Winemaker Stuart Blackwell believes that the evolution towards 100% French oak maturation will better suit the overall richness and finesse of the style.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1986

#### **TAHBILK 1860 Vines Nagambie Lakes Shiraz, Goulburn Valley Victoria**

The 1860s vines Shiraz (from a small patch of 1/2 hectare ungrafted pre- phylloxera) is amongst some of the oldest direct producing Shiraz vines in the world. The wine is both a curio and an experience. The fruit is handpicked and fermented in century old oak vats before maturation in French oak for 18 months. The label design harks back to an original Tahbilk wine label used during the 1870s, although the 1979 vintage was the first of this release. Produced in miniscule quantities, this wine is made very much in the

traditional fashion. The term 'old vines' often suggest deeply concentrated wines but this style is more elegant with plummy/ chocolate/ berry fruit flavours and gravelly tannin structures. An excellent cellaring style.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1999, 1996, 1991, 1986

#### **TORBRECK RunRig Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia**

The gorgeously opulent, perfumed and densely concentrated Torbreck Run Rig Shiraz (first vintage 1995) is sourced from 80 to 125 year old dry grown vineyards located on the western ridge of the Barossa. Dave Powell's simple philosophy of "great wines are made in the vineyard" leads to a *laissez-faire* approach. Traditional winemaking techniques comprising batch vinification in open concrete fermenters are combined with suitably offbeat ideas about the effects of ultra-violet and gravitational pull on polymerisation of tannins, fermentation speeds and Baume levels. The tiny Viognier (3%) component and American oak matured Shiraz pressings profoundly influence aroma and flavour profile. The wine is matured in 40% new French oak for up to two and a half years.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996

#### **VASSE FELIX Heytesbury Cabernet Blend, Margaret River Western Australia**

The plush, intensely flavoured and chocolate Heytesbury Cabernet Blend is a house style reflecting winemaking philosophy and selection rather than the nuances of a single vineyard or region. Winemakers are seeking "restrained power and opulence". The fruit is sourced from Lower Great Southern and Margaret River. Vineyards are "differentially harvested to allow for soil/ vigour/ yield/ flavour/ row orientation/ clonal differences and these parcels of fruit are kept separate throughout the winemaking process. The wine – which may include Malbec, Shiraz, Merlot and Cabernet Franc for further complexity – is matured in 55-60% new and old French oak for around 12 months. Heytesbury "expresses the very best of Vasse Felix" and the final selection is narrowed down through a series of rigorous tastings.

Top Vintages: 2001, 1999, 1997, 1995

#### **VERITAS Rolf Binder Wines Hanisch Shiraz, Barossa Valley South Australia**

During the 1980s winemaker Rolf Binder recognized that a four acre section of the Hanisch vineyard (1.62 hectares originally planted in 1972) yielded Shiraz grapes of "intense aromas, deep colours and flavours". The variable soils range from shallow gravelly loams to ironstone and black soils. Binder follows the approach of "letting the vineyard speak". Vinification takes place in open fermenters with a partial "drawing off and return" in new oak, regular rack and returns and pumping over. Maturation takes place for a period of around 22 months in a combination of new and used American and French *barriques* and puncheons; the percentage depending on vintage character. These are impressively structured wines with beautiful fruit definition, superb concentration and flavour length.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991

#### **WENDOUREE Cabernet - Malbec, Clare Valley South Australia**

This mature dry grown vineyard with substantial plantings of century old vines lies on well draining red- brown chocolate loams over shale. Yields are minute with very high concentration and seed content. This partly explains the "particularity" of the Wendouree style. The quality of the fruit is outstanding with incredible sugar/ acidity/ flavour balance. In many respects the Cabernet Malbec is an old fashioned wine, yet it articulates vineyard character and maintains an unbroken continuity of style rarely found on the contemporary wine scene. The Malbec component – which derives from four blocks planted between 1898 and 1960 – provides complexity and interest. This is a profoundly individual wine with intense bright fruit, underlying maturation notes and firm but pronounced vice- like tannin structures.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1998, 1991, 1994, 1990, 1989, 1986

#### **WENDOUREE Shiraz- Malbec, Clare Valley South Australia**

Wendouree Shiraz- Malbec, with plenty of blackberry/ plum/ mulberry and menthol- like fruit, fine, rusty, almost unyielding tannins, is a strong, firm "maturation style" wine with plenty of lasting power. The Shiraz component derives from the same vineyard plots, including bush vine material. Parcels of very old vine Malbec bring further distinctiveness. The wine, like all other blends in the Wendouree stable, is never more than 4500 litres in production. The wine is vinified in open fermenters and matured for 12 months new and used French oak. Vigneron Tony Brady believes the old vines get to "seed maturity at lower Baume levels". This is a house style that is true to its origins and heritage.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1998, 1991, 1994, 1990, 1989, 1986

#### **WENDOUREE Shiraz- Mataro, Clare Valley South Australia**

Wendouree Shiraz Mataro with its deep colour, core of blackberry liquorice fruit and iron fisted tannins belongs to a stable of wines which profoundly articulate vineyard character, regional provenance, the personalities of winemakers present and traditional winemaking practice. The Shiraz comes from the oldest dry grown vineyard plantings. The fruit is generally "bigger berried and medium bodied" compared to other blocks. However the particularity of house style remains a constant due to the high skin to juice ratio and the exceptionally high seed content in the fruit (especially Shiraz). The wine is matured in new (20%) and used Seguin Moreau oak for 12 months. Consultant winemaker Stephen George plays 'devil's advocate' through the critical period of assemblage and bottling.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1998, 1991, 1994, 1990, 1989, 1986

#### **WYNN'S COONAWARRA ESTATE John Riddoch Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia**

Wynns John Riddoch, a single varietal ultra Cabernet, is sourced from older vineyard blocks planted on their own roots in the 1960s and 1970s. The cropping levels are very low for Coonawarra at around 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 tonnes per acre. Fermentation takes place immediately after crushing for about 5 to 8 days after which it is pressed off at dryness. The ripe tannins and flavours are extracted while "retaining fruit sweetness and structure". Maturation takes place in new French oak hogsheads for between 18 and 26 months depending on vintage conditions. The profoundly concentrated Wynns John Riddoch is an essence of Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon reflecting the nuances of the unique terra rossa soils and the imprint of house style.

Top Vintages: 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1986, 1982

#### **YARRA YERING Dry Red Wine No.1 Cabernet, Yarra Valley Victoria**

The 70 acre Yarra Yering vineyard lies on a north facing midriff of hillside on deep, broken up and well draining gravelly soils. Bailey Carrodus seeks to make a wine of "complexity, palate evenness and after taste". Vinification in small open fermenters is followed by maturation in 'closely textured' new Seguin Moreau French oak for around 22 months. Carrodus likens seasoning of wine in oak like salt in porridge, "If it is pronounced it makes it taste terrible". Yarra Yering Dry Red No 1 – a Cabernet dominant Bordeaux blend – has bright blackcurrant fruit characters, savoury complexity and fine grained tannins. The wines age for between 10 and 15 years, easily developing extraordinary exotic, gamey nuances over time.

Top Vintages: 2001, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1986

#### ***Distinguished***

#### **BANNOCKBURN Pinot Noir, Geelong Victoria**

Both vineyard individuality and vintage personality are important elements of the Pinot Noir experience. The Pinot Noir Clone MV6 (Mother Vineyard 6) is of the same genetic material brought out by James Busby in the 19th century. The low yielding Serre Vineyard plays an essential role in the wine. After vinification the wine is matured in new French oak for approximately 14-16 months. Bannockburn Pinot Noir is one of Australia's most interesting and reliable Pinot Noirs. Highly defined, black cherry aromas with a meaty complexity, silky palate and deep- set flavours are the hallmarks of the style. Rick Kinzbrunner – of Gioconda fame – has taken on a part time mentoring role to ensure a smooth transition of winemaking philosophy.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1994

#### **BANNOCKBURN Chardonnay, Geelong Victoria**

Bannockburn Chardonnay is an immensely complex wine reflecting both the inherent quality of vineyard site, tried and tested old clones and a strong winemaking philosophy based on 'low input – maximum flavour'. The low vigour vineyards are located on volcanic soils over limestone. The wine is whole bunch pressed. Fermentation in barrel takes place over a six week period although it is not unusual for some barrels to take months. The wine is matured in a combination of 1 year old and new (30%) oak for 9 to 11 months. The oak plays a supporting role. Tropical fruit aromas, nutty, vanillin complexity, ripe fruit, a creamy palate and fruit sweetness make it one of the best Chardonnays in the country.

Top Vintages: 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998

#### **BASS PHILLIP Estate Pinot Noir, Gippsland Victoria**

Bass Phillip – named after Australian explorers George Bass and Arthur Phillip – is located in prime dairy country near Leongatha, South Gippsland. The exquisitely balanced single vineyard Estate Pinot Noir draws fruit from the extremely low cropping, closely spaced north easterly facing, four hectare un-irrigated vineyard. The wine is vinified in an open stainless steel fermenter with regular plunging to extract colour and flavour. After fermentation the wine is gravity racked into a combination of new (60%) and old French Alliers oak for a maturation period of around 15 to 18 months. Phillip Jones believes, "The difference between good and great Pinot Noir is texture". The wine tends to be at its peak after around six years of bottle age.

Top Vintages: 2003, 2001, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1994, 1991

#### **BEST'S Bin O Shiraz, Grampians - Great Western Victoria**

Best's Bin O Shiraz is sourced from four low yielding Concongella Shiraz blocks established in 1966, 1970, 1992 and 1994. Vinification takes place in open stainless steel fermenters. The wine is matured in a combination of 1/3 new and one and two year old French and American oak (*barriques* and puncheons) for around 12 months. In a declassified year some Thomson Reserve fruit (from some of the oldest Shiraz plantings in Victoria) can be included. Viv Thomson – 4th generation winemaker – believes that there are two types of wines, "talking wines and drinking wines". This is a happy blend of both. It has intense mulberry blackberry aromas, background oak and loose-knit gravelly tannins developing further complexity with medium term cellaring.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1998, 1996, 1992, 1991, 1990

#### **BOWEN ESTATE Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia**

Winemaker Doug Bowen says, "Hand pruning restricts crop size to about 2 tonnes/ acre which results in full bodied wines with greater depth of colour and longevity". The Estate fruit is picked at optimum ripeness and when the tannins are "so hard they can break your teeth". After 6 days of vinification in vinimatics a quarter of the wine is transferred into new French oak *barriques* to complete fermentation. This is followed by 20-22 months maturation in new 30% and used French oak. Emma Bowen – second generation family wine maker with a strong sense of destiny – believes that 90% of the character is "preset in the vineyard". Bowen Estate Cabernet Sauvignon has pure blackcurrant pastille fruit, underlying vanillin oak and fine grainy tannins.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1986

#### **CHARLES MELTON Nine Popes Shiraz- Grenache- Mourvedre, Barossa Valley South Australia**

The dry grown mature vineyards (many over 80 years old) are scattered throughout the Barossa floor from Williamstown in the south to Ebenezer in the north. Whole bunch fermentation, open fermentation, *pigeage* and indigenous fermentation are some of the various winemaking techniques used to increase blending options. The perfume of Grenache, the richness of Shiraz, the structure of Mourvedre and the savoury notes of oak bring great complexity and flavour. The wine is matured in 25% new French and American oak which "gives a kiss rather than a thump" to the overall style. Typically Nine Popes shows exotic musky, mulberry/ plum gamey aromas, plenty of fruit sweetness and flesh on the palate. These wines are best enjoyed relatively young.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990

#### **CRAWFORD RIVER WINES Riesling, Henty Western Victoria**

Established in 1874 as a sheep and cattle station Crawford River Estate still remains in family hands. Fourth generation grazier/ winemaker John Thomson planted a five acre vineyard in 1977. The single four hectare Riesling vineyard lies on loamy gravelly soils over an ancient sea bed. The roots penetrate through a volcanic layer into a calcareous substrata. The dry grown vines which are hand pruned and picked to "maintain a botrytis free style pull out different mineralities with depth". The wine is partially whole bunch fermented in stainless steel, "a bloody inefficient" and relatively unusual method of vinification. The wine is typified by limey/ herb garden aromas, and a chalkiness and mineral acidity on the palate.

Top Vintages: 2004, 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1996, 1995, 1990, 1986

#### **DOMAINE A Cabernet Sauvignon, Coal River Valley Tasmania**

The 20 hectare northwest-facing Stoney Vineyard, anchored in an ancient petrified forest of doleritic bedrock, wraps along the haunches of the Richmond Tier taking full advantage of the early morning to evening sunshine. Ripeness is achieved most years in this marginal climate because of prevailing warm, dry, northern winds during the growing season. Domaine A Cabernet Sauvignon also includes a small percentage of Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Violets, roses and blackcurrants pervade through the wine like an English country garden. The tannins are especially fine grained and there is a freshness and mineral quality on the palate. Some savoury nuances derived from between 24 months and 36 months in new oak bring further complexity. An exquisite wine.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1999, 1997, 1994, 1992, 1991

#### **HOUGHTON Jack Mann Cabernet Blend, Western Australia**

The late Jack Mann, winemaking veteran of 51 vintages, once said, "In my opinion the greatest grape is the noble Cabernet. Cabernet Sauvignon is the only variety that would be tolerated in heaven". Houghton Jack Mann Cabernet Malbec Shiraz is Houghton's flagship wine and is made largely from the best parcels of premium Great Southern fruit. The mature low yielding vineyards are located on gravelly loams. The wine – cold macerated and fermented in small vats – is matured in a combination of mostly new and one-year old French oak for about 18-24 months depending on vintage. The wine is a very deep, concentrated style with intense mocha- berry fruit, plenty of vanilla/ malt oak and savoury/ textured tannins. A classic cellaring style.

Top Vintages: 1999, 1998, 1995, 1994

#### **KATNOOK ESTATE Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia**

Katnook Estate – originally named and owned by Coonawarra pioneer John Riddoch – was replanted in 1970. The vines, planted on terra rossa soils over limestone, are trellised on traditional open sprawling canopies. Vinification takes place in closed static fermenters with regular pumping over of floating cap. The wine is allowed to macerate on skins for approximately 14 days before transfer into, depending on vintage, approximately 45-60% new French oak (predominantly medium grained Nevers) for a period of around 24 months before bottling. Katnook Cabernet Sauvignon reflects its strong Coonawarra provenance with plenty of intense blackcurrant mulberry fruit definition, mid palate richness, finely grained tannins and excellent flavour length. The wines have medium to long term cellaring potential.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1986

#### **LEASINGHAM Classic Clare Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia**

Classic Clare Shiraz fruit is principally sourced from the windswept dry land Shrober's Vineyard just north of Auburn and the mature Old Provis vineyard 5 kilometres north east of Clare. The low yielding vines – on variable soils of terra rossa and slate – yield extremely concentrated Shiraz fruit. The wine is batch vinified in small open fermenters. Nowadays it is matured in a blend of new (60-80%) and old French *barriques* for approximately 18 months. The resulting wines are richly flavoured, with highly defined plum/ berry/ mocha fruit characters, chocolate tannins and integrated savoury oak. These opulent densely packed wines are 'regionally hallmarked' with a strong, firm structure. The 1994 vintage won the coveted Jimmy Watson trophy at the Melbourne Wine Show.

Top Vintages: 1998, 1996, 1994, 1992, 1991

#### **LEEUWIN ESTATE Art Series Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia**

The muscular but opulent Leeuwin Estate Art Series Cabernet Sauvignon is an important southern Margaret River style with blackcurrant earthy aromas, underlying oak and strong gravelly tannin structures. The vineyard, 30-60 metres above sea level, is located on deep gravel and loamy soils over sandy gravels. Individual parcels are selected in the vineyard and picked at optimum ripeness and flavour. The wine is batch- vinified and partially whole bunch fermented in closed fermenters, then left on skins for around three weeks before pressing. It is matured in 25-40% new French oak and used Chardonnay barrels for about two years. A proportion of Petit Verdot (structure and colour), Malbec (mid palate richness) and Merlot (softness) is included to add complexity.

Top Vintages: 2001, 1997, 1995, 1991

#### **LINDEMANS Limestone Ridge Shiraz- Cabernet, Coonawarra South Australia**

Lindemans Limestone Ridge Vineyard – named after the limestone cap that passes just below the surface – sits on the main north south ridge in Coonawarra. Planted in 1967, this 24 hectare vineyard is planted to about 18 hectares of Shiraz and 6 hectares of Cabernet Sauvignon. The vines are planted on unusually shallow terra rossa soils over limestone. The naturally low- yielding vineyard has a cropping level of about 3 tonnes per acre. After vinification the wine is matured for approximately 14 months in new American oak. This Coonawarra stalwart successfully intertwines the nuances of Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and American oak. An opulent, loose-knit style with intense blackcurrant meaty aromas, fine ripe chocolate tannins and malty oak.

Top Vintages: 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1986, 1979, 1976

#### **MAJELLA Cabernet, Coonawarra South Australia**

Majella Cabernet – with its abundant blackcurrants/ cedar aromas, marvelous generosity, complexity, richness and ripe lacy chocolate tannins and savoury oak nuances – possesses an extra dimension that goes beyond the idea of regional definition and winemaker's art. There is an underlying warmth and strength of character which seeps through the wine. The style – made from a prime selection of fruit from Majella's substantial terra rossa vineyards – devoutly hymns and hums its origins. The wine is batch vinified in half headed down static stainless steel and half rotary fermenters. Fermentation is completed in new and used tightly grained French oak for around 12 months before final barrel selection, blending and further oak maturation for 10 months.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996

#### **MITCHELTON Print Nagambie Lakes Shiraz, Goulburn Valley Victoria**

The 154 hectare Mitchelton Estate vineyard hugs a horseshoe bend of the Goulburn River. This body of cool water can moderate temperatures by up to 2 degrees. The wine is based on selected fruit from the 35 year old Crescent and D Blocks located on alluvial red brown loam soils and heavier clays. The 15 year old Airstrip Block – on rootstocks – also contributes exceptional fruit. Winemaking follows the maxim: 'Maximum attention, minimum intervention'. The wine is fermented in headed down static fermenters and matured for 16-18 months in a combination of new (around 35-40%) and old French oak. This is a superbly concentrated single estate wine with chocolate tannin structures and mocha oak complexity. The 1990 won the prestigious Jimmy Watson Trophy.

Top Vintages: 1998, 1996, 1992, 1991

#### **MOUNT MARY Chardonnay, Yarra Valley Victoria**

Mount Mary Chardonnay is a 'back from the dead' wine. Vine trunk disease prevalent in the vineyard at one stage threatened to stop the wine being made for lack of enough fruit. Nature and nurture seem to have found equilibrium. The wine is made along traditional Burgundian lines with partial whole bunch fermentation. It only sees a modicum of new oak during maturation. It is a very distinctive 'conversation' style which not only reflects vineyard site but also a very individual wine making philosophy. The wines often have a nectarine/ pear/ grapefruit aromas and compelling lanolin nuances rarely found in other Australian Chardonnay. The palate – lean and mineral when young – develops more creaminess, richness and complexity with age.

Top Vintages: 2003, 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1995, 1992, 1991, 1990

#### **ORLANDO Lawsons Shiraz, Padthaway South Australia**

Orlando Lawson's Shiraz is drawn from a single vineyard planted in 1968 on deep sandy soils on gentle eastern slopes surrounded by eucalypt trees. Vinification in wide-based closed and open static fermenters is followed by extended skin maceration to achieve optimum extraction of colour, flavour and tannin structure. Some of the wine is racked off to complete fermentation in barrel to increase blending options and complexity. The wine is then matured in new American oak hogsheads for a period of up to 25 months depending on vintage conditions. Overall, consistency of quality is impressive and the wines have a regional menthol edge, which is constant regardless of vintage. These are rich, flavoursome wines with ripe, mouth-filling tannin structures.

Top Vintages: 1999, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1991, 1990

#### **ORLANDO St. Hugo Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia**

Orlando St Hugo – one of Coonawarra's most dependable wines – is admired by collectors for its consistency over vintages and strong varietal/ regional character. The wine is made from select parcels of Cabernet grown on terra rossa soils. Batch vinification takes place in static fermenters with regular pumping over to irrigate the skin cap and enhance extraction and polymerisation of tannins. Some parcels are racked off towards dryness to complete fermentation in French oak hogsheads. The wine is matured in mainly French oak (but some American oak) for around 18-21 months before final barrel selection blending and bottling. Orlando St Hugo is a classic Coonawarra Cabernet showing refined blackcurrant cedar intensity, fine grained tannin structure, savoury oak and flavour length.

Top Vintages: 2000, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1993, 1991, 1990, 1986, 1985

#### **PENFOLDS Magill Estate Shiraz, Adelaide South Australia**

Penfold Magill Estate style has evolved over the years; the early vintages were quite lean and tight. Since the early 1990s it shows brighter fruit definition and greater palate vitality. Winemakers are interested in flavour development and tannin ripeness resulting in wines with supple structures and fruit richness. The wine is vinified in open wax-lined concrete tanks. It finishes fermentation in barrel and then matured in a combination of 2/3 new French and 1/3 new American oak for a period of around 12-14 months. John Bird, emeritus winemaker says, "We approach our winemaking in a similar way to a classic Bordeaux Chateau. One part of the vineyard will bring perfume and structure, another concentration and ripeness and another complexity and finesse".

Top Vintages: 2002, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1991 Avoid 1984

#### **PETALUMA Chardonnay, Adelaide Hills - Piccadilly Valley South Australia**

The ethereal, complex and utterly sublime Petaluma Chardonnay is sourced from seven distinguished sites in the Piccadilly Valley all on free draining red brown soils on north and east facing slopes. Winemaker Brian Croser describes the various fruit characteristics as ranging "from the most exotic grapefruit to more subtle tropical fruit, pear, peach and nectarine". Vinification kicks off in stainless steel and the fermenting juice is soon racked into 100% new fine grained French Vosges oak to complete barrel fermentation. The wine is left on its lees with occasional *battonage* (lees stirring) for approximately 12 months. This wine has exquisite definition, with tropical fruit, particularly grapefruit aromas, new oak and a creamy palate, balanced by cutting acidity.

Top Vintages: 2003, 2001, 1999, 1997, 1996

#### **PETALUMA Hanlin Hill Riesling, Clare Valley South Australia**

Petaluma's important Hanlin Hill vineyard on the western face of the Clare Hills is one of the highest vineyards in the region with an elevation of 500 metres. The soils are mostly red brown soils interspersed with gravelly shales. The fruit is crushed and allowed to cold settle in stainless steel before draining and light pressing into stainless steel fermenters. The juice – inoculated with Petaluma's own yeast strains – is cool fermented after which the wine is cold settled, racked and then bottled in July. Winemaker Brian Croser describes his Petaluma Riesling as a "dry late picked style". This is a quintessential Clare Valley Riesling with superb pure lime/ lemon aromas, fruit sweetness and fresh cutting mineral acidity.

Top Vintages: 2003, 2002, 2001, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1994, 1991, 1990, 1986, 1984

#### **PLANTAGENET Shiraz, Great Southern - Mount Barker Western Australia**

Plantagenet Shiraz – a definitive Great Southern style with pepper/ spice/ aniseed aromas, underlying oak and fine lacy tannins – derives principally from the estate's cool climate vineyards: Bouverie (established 1968) and Wyjup (early 1970s). Both vineyards are planted on gravelly loams over shallow horizons of clay and are subject to extremes in diurnal temperatures. The Charleston Vineyard component – from a warmer meso-climate – brings "density and generosity". The wine, with naturally high acidity, is batch vinified in open and closed fermenters at warm temperatures to achieve gentle tannin extraction. It is then matured in around new (40%) and old French oak for a period of 16-18 months: "The oak adding a level of structure and texture rather than adding flavour".

Top Vintages: 2001, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1994

#### **REDBANK WINERY Sally's Paddock Cabernet - Shiraz, Pyrenees Victoria**

The four hectare un-irrigated Sally's Paddock vineyard (planted by Neil Robb and his wife Sally in 1973) was originally planted with Shiraz. The vines are established on alluvial gravels over rich friable red clay soils at an altitude of 420 metres. The wines are on the elegant side, although they can show plenty of blackcurrant pastille and cedar wood aromas, palate richness, underlying oak and fine, grippy tannins. The wine is a blend of Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc a palette of aromas and textures woven together without any variety dominating the wine. It is made with a *laissez-faire* approach and maturation takes place in a combination of new (60-70%) French and American oak puncheons.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2000, 1998, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1991

#### **SEPPELT Great Western Show Sparkling Shiraz, Grampians Victoria**

Seppelt Show Sparkling Shiraz, an Australian classic and a curiosity, has been made at Great Western for over a century. Nowadays the wine is a sparkling version of the St Peters Great Western Shiraz. The wine is made in exactly the same way but is matured in large oak vats for a further 12 months. It is then tiraged (addition of liqueur and yeast

for secondary bottle fermentation and bottle aged) for a further 8 years before disgorgement. This is a very eccentric style and the absolute pinnacle of its type, a "dry table wine with bubbles" with beautiful creaminess and yeasty complexity, derived from a long period of bottle age. The wines have remarkable cellaring life.

Top Vintages: 1994, 1993, 1991, 1990, 1987, 1986, 1985, 1984, 1965, 1964, 1963, 1946

#### **SEPPELT St. Peter's Great Western Vineyards Shiraz, Grampians - Great Western Victoria**

St Peter's Shiraz derives from low yielding vineyards planted on weathered volcanic soils. St Peter's Vineyard and Imperial Vineyard were established in the 1930s and Police and McKenzie Vineyards established in the late 1970s. During batch vinification in static and open top fermenters pump overs and rack and returns are used to extract colour and flavour. The wine is left on skins for 10 to 20 days post ferment to extract the "beautiful powdery tannins". After draining and pressing the wine is typically matured in French oak for 18 months in new (30%) and used French oak. This is a style in evolution; more recent vintages are fruit driven with bright blueberry, mulberry, blackberry aromas, fine chalky tannins and fruit concentration.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1988, 1986

#### **TIM ADAMS The Aberfeldy Shiraz, Clare Valley South Australia**

The intensely perfumed and muscular Aberfeldy Shiraz reflects the character of vineyard site as much as the personality of the winemaker. The independently owned 4 acre Aberfeldy Vineyard was originally a part of the adjacent Wendouree property owned by Alfred Percy Birks in 1904. This is also older, clonal material with very high seed content and larger berries. Vinification takes place in closed top fermenters. After basket pressing it spends 12 months in one- year- old oak, mostly American, before transfer to new three to four years air dried American oak for a further eight months. This is a deeply concentrated opulent style with blackberry aromas, malty/ cedary oak and a firm tannin kick. Yet another strong example of top notch Clare Valley Shiraz.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1994, 1991, 1990

#### **TYRRELL'S Vat 47 Chardonnay, Hunter Valley New South Wales**

Vat 47 fruit comes from three sandy alluvial sites: the HVD Vineyard – planted with the original Penfold clone in 1923, the NVC Vineyard and Tyrrell's Short Flat. The must is cold settled for 24 hours before fermentation is "kicked off" in stainless steel. Fermentation is completed in new French oak. The wine, with naturally balanced acidities, sees no malo- lactic fermentation. The level of tartaric acid in Hunter Valley Chardonnay is very high, almost twice the amount as in some of the cooler districts of Victoria. The wine is matured in new oak for between 3 and 7 months. "You can determine a good vintage," says Bruce Tyrrell, "by whether you can taste the wine under your collar."

Top Vintages: 2004, 2003, 2001, 2000, 1998

#### **TYRRELL'S Vat 1 Semillon, Hunter Valley New South Wales**

Vat 1 Semillon (first vintage 1963) was originally called Hunter River Riesling. The 35 to 75 year old vines are grown on heavy rich volcanic clay soils. The fruit is picked at relatively low sweetness levels making these some of the lowest alcohol wines produced in Australia. The juice is cold settled prior to cold fermentation. The wine, matured in stainless steel, receives between one and eight weeks yeast lees contact to increase overall complexity. The young wines show plenty of pure, fresh, lemony curd fruit characters and a clean, steely (almost bracing) acid backbone. Over time it becomes extremely complex, with a golden colour, honeyed, straw- like aromas and a soft, immensely complex and flavoursome palate.

Top Vintages: 2003, 2002, 2001, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1993, 1992, 1987, 1986, 1984

#### **VASSE FELIX Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River Western Australia**

The Vasse Felix Cabernet Sauvignon captures an overall regional character rather than site specific nuances. Batch vinification takes place in a combination of rotary and open fermenters. Rack and returns, pumping air into the ferments and micro- oxygenation are also used to increase flavour complexity and soften tannin structure. Some batches are given extended maceration or partially barrel fermented in mainly French oak *barrisques*. The wine is matured in new (55-60%) and used oak for around 18 months. This is superbly made wine showing intense cranberry blackcurrant aromas and cedary complexity, plenty of fruit sweetness and lacy tannin structure. Some vintages may also include small percentages of Malbec, Merlot or Cabernet Franc to create complexity, balance and freshness.

Top Vintages: 2002, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1995, 1994, 1992, 1991

#### **WOLF BLASS Black Label Cabernet Blend, South Australia**

Wolf Blass Label is a Cabernet- Shiraz blend based on the best available parcels of fruit. The multi- regional fruit source includes the Barossa Valley, Langhorne Creek, McLaren Vale and the Clare Valley. The wine became famous after winning the Melbourne Wine Show's prestigious Jimmy Watson Trophy three times in a row (vintages 1973, 1974 and 1975). The 1999 Black Label won the same trophy for the fourth time. Individual parcels of fruit are batch vinified in open fermentation tanks. Fermentation is completed in French and American hogsheads. The wine sees up to three years in new American and French oak prior to bottling. Wolf Blass invented the term 'No wood - no good'. Wolf Blass Black Label is substantially propped up by oak.

Top Vintages: 1999, 1998, 1996, 1993, 1991, 1986, 1983

#### **WYNN'S COONAWARRA ESTATE Cabernet Sauvignon, Coonawarra South Australia**

Wynn's Coonawarra Estate 'Black Label' Cabernet Sauvignon (first vintage 1954) has evolved markedly over the decades with the advent of three phase power, refrigeration, mechanical pruning and harvesting and winemaker experience. The wine is described as a "full bodied style based on darker fruits". The fruit is sourced from Wynn's extensive holdings of Cabernet vineyards (of varying vine age) located on the highly desirable terra rossa over limestone soils. Fermentation takes place in static and roto- fermenters. The wine is matured in new (never more than 20%) and old French and American oak for between 12 and 18 months depending on vintage. This is a classic Coonawarra Cabernet which develops into a rich, chocolaty wine with age.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1996, 1991, 1990, 1986, 1985, 1978, 1976, 1966, 1962, 1960, 1955

#### **YARRA YARRA VINEYARD The Yarra Yarra Cabernet Sauvignon, Yarra Valley Victoria**

Yarra Yarra Vineyard, planted in 1977, lies on delicate, lean, free- draining gravelly north- facing slopes. The ten acre vineyard spreads across a series of undulations: Sarah's Hill, Phoebe's Hill and Charlotte's Hill are named after three daughters. The fruit which is typified by "rich red berry characters, nutty flavoured pips and balanced natural acidities" derives largely from the mature low vigour low yielding Sarah's Hill block. The wine is partially whole- bunch fermented and regularly hand plunged. After post maceration for 10-20 days, the wine is matured in new and old Alliers oak *barrisques* for around 24 months. Ian Mclean recognizes his Reserve parcels early by the "intense mulberry red berry truffy fruit characters, incredible concentration and great length".

Top Vintages: 2000, 1999, 1995, 1994, 1991, 1990

#### **YARRA YERING Dry Red Wine No.2 Shiraz, Yarra Valley Victoria**

Dr Bailey Carrodus' search for suitable vineyard land was based on a simple premise: that it should be where vines had thrived before and had avoided the threat of spring frost damage. Carrodus prefers a vertically positioned canopy for his Shiraz to increase exposure to sunlight. The wine is vinified in open fermenters before extended skin maceration to increase complexity and tannin balance. Maturation follows in new (30%) and used 'closely textured' Seguin Moreau French oak for up to 22 months. It is hard to pin point this style as it is quite individual and subject to vintage variation. The best vintages show intense raspberry choco- berry aromas, touches of white pepper, ripe tannin structures and plenty of flavour complexity.

Top Vintages: 2001, 1998, 1996, 1995, 1991, 1986

#### **YERINGBERG Cabernet Blend, Yarra Valley Victoria**

The historic and wonderful Yeringberg was established in 1862 by Guillaume de Pury. The original wine business flourished between the late 1860s and early 1900s. In 1969 Guil de Pury planted a small one acre vineyard on the grubbed out old Yeringberg vineyard site and later expanded it. This north- east facing vineyard is located on silty clay loams interspersed with buckshot gravels. Vintage takes place between early and late April. "If we haven't picked by ANZAC Day, the 25th April, we start to worry", says Guil. The wine is vinified in open fermenters. Maturation takes place in a combination of new and used French oak. The fruit structure of this wine can be strikingly similar to Mount Mary.

Top Vintages: 2002, 2000, 1998, 1996, 1990