

Gemtree, Bloodstone Shiraz 2003 McLaren Vale

19 Jul 2005 by JR

25 Jul: Note on Oddbins availability: Oh dear. The wine apparently arrived last week 'and will be sent out to stores from 27 Jul' ie the day after tomorrow. It will not appear on their website as it qualifies as an 'odd bin' apparently. I had been told, 'We are expecting the Gemtree Bloodstone to arrive week commencing 18th July', but didn't realise this meant arrival in warehouse rather than on shelf. Many apologies to those of you who have already tried in vain to find this wine chez Oddbins. Do look out for it this week.

I wrote recently in [Australia's human wine surplus](#) about the problem new graduates from Australia's excellent oenology faculties have in finding a decent job. One creative solution of course is to marry into a grape growing family, which is just what Mike Brown, Gemtree's winemaker did. This really is a family operation. The Buttery family have been growing grapes at McLaren Flat for three generations and now have a total of 134 hectares/330 acres of vines there and on Tatchilla Road supplying the likes of D'Arenberg. Since 1998 however they have also produced their own wine, thanks to Mike Brown who married Melissa Buttery, the Gemtree viticulturist. Her brother Andrew runs the business side, with his wife Helen. All very neat, eh? (And does this sound industrial, as the Australian wine business is so often described? See [Why do the French always say non?](#))

But the reason **Gemtree, Bloodstone Shiraz 2003 McLaren Vale** is cited here has nothing to do with how it is produced, it is simply because it is delicious and tastes as though it costs quite a bit more than the £9.99 that Oddbins are currently asking for it in the UK. (It does cost more in the US, as you see at [find this wine](#).) The Bloodstone blend is exclusive to Oddbins and contains some rather cooler fruit from the Gemtree vineyard as well as lovely Tatchilla Road fruit which comprises the bottling called **Uncut Shiraz 2003**. The Bloodstone has a great big, sweet nose with a suggestion of violets and no shortage of refreshing acidity. It's much livelier than most South Australian 2003s.

Purple pagers can check on my notes on well over 100 examples of [Barossa Shiraz](#) published last weekend but I am a great fan of McLaren Vale's rather glossier, less dusty way with Shiraz, and other red varieties.

Gemtree, Tatty Road Cabernet- Petit Verdot- Merlot 2003 grown on the Tatchilla Road Vineyard, will not arrive chez Oddbins until September but is also beautifully gentle in texture while clearly being heavily influenced by its locality. And my favourite of all from the range is **Gemtree, Bloodstone Tempranillo 2004** from vines that were planted as recently as 1999. This has real varietal savour and a sappy dry finish yet beautifully round from its 16- month stint in French oak. This wine will be stocked by Laithwaites in the UK from mid- aug at £16.99 - not such good value as the Shiraz but an interesting wine nevertheless. Clearly Gemtree is a name to look for.

See www.gemtreevineyards.com.au for background detail.