

James Halliday
Australian
Wine Companion
2010 Edition

BALNAVES OF COONAWARRA ★★★★★



Grapegrower, viticultural consultant and vigneron, Doug Balnaves has over 50 hectares of high-quality estate vineyards. The wines are invariably excellent, often outstanding, notable for their supple mouthfeel, varietal integrity, balance and length; the tannins are always fine and ripe, the oak subtle and perfectly integrated. Coonawarra at its best. Winery of the Year 2008 Wine Companion.

Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

Intense Coonawarra fruit, with amazing purity and poise; polished cassis and redcurrant combine effortlessly with the fine oak framework; full-bodied, dark and dense, with layered fruit coursing along the palate, harmoniously mingling with the fine-grained tannins. ProCork. 14.5% alc. **Rating 95 To 2020**

Cabernet Merlot 2007

Pure and fine redcurrant fruit aromas with cedary oak and a touch of cinnamon; the palate is seamless and the transition of fruit across the palate is integrated with the quite slippery fine-grained tannins; very long and very good value. Screwcap. 14.5% alc. **Rating 94 To 2018**

CHARLES MELTON ★★★★★

CHARLES MELTON

FINE BAROSSA RED WINES

Charlie Melton, one of the Barossa Valley's great characters, with wife Virginia by his side, makes some of the most eagerly sought à la mode wines in Australia. Inevitably, the Melton empire has continued to grow in response to the insatiable demand. There are now 7 hectares at Lyndoch, 9 hectares at Krondorf and 1.6 hectares at Light Pass, the lion's share to Shiraz and Grenache, and a small planting of Cabernet Sauvignon. An additional 30 hectare property has been purchased in High Eden, with 10 hectares of Shiraz planted in 2009, and a 5 hectare field planting of Grenache, Shiraz, Mataro, Carignan, Cinsaut, Picpoul and Bourboulenc to be planted in spring 2010. The expanded volume has had no adverse effect on the wonderfully rich, sweet and well-made wines. The original Krondorf village church (circa 1864) has been acquired and converted to guest accommodation.

Barossa Valley Rose of Virginia 2008

Brilliant pale crimson; typically delicious red fruit aromas and flavours; early picking and 6-week cold fermentation has overridden vintage threat. Screwcap. 13% alc

Rating 94 To 2009

Nine Popes 2006

A synergistic blend (Shiraz/Grenache) in this wine with no confection characters whatsoever; has wonderful texture in the layers of black and red fruits, oak and tannins in a calibrated support role. Screwcap. 14.5% alc **Rating 96 To 2021**

CLONAKILLA WINES ★★★★★

Clonakilla



The indefatigable Tim Kirk, with an inexhaustible thirst for knowledge, is the winemaker and manager of this family winery founded by Tim's father, scientist Dr John Kirk. It is not at all surprising that the quality of the wines is excellent, especially the Shiraz Viognier, which has paved the way for numerous others to follow, but remains the best example in Australia.

Canberra District Shiraz Viognier 2008

As expected the wine is young and buoyant, with a highly fragrant perfume of red fruit, fresh blackberry, violets, roasted meat and a little tar; the palate reveals the true potential of this superb wine with a cascading array of flavours and thrillingly silky tannin, poised acidity and a peacock's tail on the very long and precise palate. **Rating 97 To 2025**

Hilltops Shiraz 2008

Dark shiraz fruit, with blackberry, roasted meat and a gentle spice background; medium-bodied with serious intent, the tannins are ripe, the fruit juicy and the finish, long a savoury; lovely harmony. Screwcap. 14% alc **Rating 94 To 2015**

O'Riada Canberra District Shiraz 2007

A fine and restrained bouquet of red fruit, Asian spices and a touch of mineral complexity; the oak is barely evident and the fruit concentration is undeniable, as on the palate, the wine is long, luscious and finishes with slippery fine tannin and true restraint. Screwcap. 14% alc **Rating 95 To 2016**

CULLEN CULLEN WINES ★★★★★

One of the pioneers of Margaret River, which has always produced long-lived wines of highly individual style from the mature estate vineyards. The vineyard has progressed beyond organic to biodynamic certification and, subsequently, has become the first vineyard and winery in Australia to be certified carbon neutral. This requires the calculation of all of the carbon used and carbon dioxide emitted in the winery, and the carbon is then offset by the planting of new trees. Winemaking is now in the hands of Vanya Cullen, daughter of the founders; she is possessed of an extraordinarily good palate. It is impossible to single out any particular wine from the top echelon; all are superb.

Diana Madeline 2006

Bright hue, although not particularly deep; lighter fruit style than usual, albeit with normal tannin structure. Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot/Petit Verdot/Cabernet Franc/Malbec. Screwcap. 13% alc. **Rating 94 To 2014**

Kevin John Margaret River Chardonnay 2006

Immaculately balanced and structured, the components of fruit and oak so seamless that the near-explosive velocity of the build up in intensity of white peach and grapefruit on the finish and aftertaste takes you by surprise. Screwcap. 13.5% alc **Rating 96 To 2021**

Mangan Margaret River Merlot Petit Verdot Malbec 2007

Strikingly dense colour; a roughly equal blend of the three varieties, deliciously opulent and velvety; has spent only four months in oak, but is not callow or tannic; masterly winemaking. Screwcap. 14.5% alc **Rating 95 To 2022**

Mangan Vineyard Margaret River Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2008

A magical combination of delicacy on the bouquet, and explosive intensity on the racing palate; 28% barrel ferment has been absorbed into the wine; wild yeast. 70/30. Screwcap. 11.5% alc **Rating 96 To 2015**

Cullen Wines Margaret River White 2008

The dominant Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon blend inevitably (and appropriately) results in a full-flavoured wine smoothed by a small amount of chardonnay and verdelho. Screwcap. 12.5% **Rating 90 To 2012**

INNOCENT BYSTANDER ★★★★★

innocent bystander

Phil Sexton made his first fortune as a pioneer micro-brewer, and invested part of that fortune in establishing Devil's Lair. Late in 1996 he sold Devil's Lair to Southcorp, which had purchased Coldstream Hills earlier that year. Two years later he purchased a hillside property less than 1 km from Coldstream Hills, and sharing the same geological structure and aspect.

Yarra Valley Pinot Noir 2008

Really bright colour and lovely vibrant fruit; young, juicy and lots of fun with a touch of spice playing support to delicious cherry fruit; certainly a wine to be enjoyed and not necessarily in moderation. Screwcap. 13.9% alc **Rating 92 To 2012**

Yarra Valley Chardonnay 2007

Bright and lively pear fruit aroma with a gentle touch of spicy oak; clean and fresh with a fine hint of citrus lingering on the finish. Screwcap. 14% alc **Rating 90 To 2013**

Yarra Valley Pinot Gris 2008

Pear fruit and some complex candied orange zest aromas on the bouquet; generous and quite full, but finishes fine with fresh acidity and a lingering pear flesh flavour. Screwcap. 13.5% alc **Rating 90 To 2012**

Yarra Valley Pinot Rose 2008

Pale bright fuschia; fragrant strawberry aroma and flavour are locked into a crisp, long and dry palate; all-purpose food style. Screwcap. 13% alc. **Rating 90 To 2010**

GREENSTONE VINEYARD ★★★★★



This is one of the most interesting new ventures to emerge over the past few years, bringing together David Gleave MW, born and educated in Canada, now a long-term UK resident who manages an imported wine business and writes widely about the wines of Italy; Alberto Antonini, a graduate of the University of Florence, with postgraduate degrees from Bordeaux and University of California (Davis), and Italian Flying Winemaker; and Mark Walpole, a 20-year veteran with Brown Brothers and now manager of their 700 hectares of vineyards. The partners have chosen what they consider an outstanding vineyard on the red soil of the Heathcote region, planted to 17 hectares of Shiraz, 2 hectares of Sangiovese and 1 hectare of Monastrell (Mourvedre).

Heathcote Shiraz 2006

Grapes picked at optimal ripeness, producing a wine that is stacked with regional black fruits but has no alcohol-derived sweetness; long finish with fine-grained tannins. Screwcap. 13.5% alc. **Rating 95 To 2021**

GROSSET ★★★★★

GROSSET

Jeffrey Grosset has assumed the unchallenged mantle of Australia's foremost Riesling maker in the wake of John Vickery stepping back to a consultancy role for Richmond Grove. Grosset's pre-eminence in Riesling making is recognised both domestically and internationally; however, he merits equal recognition for the other wines in his portfolio: Semillon Sauvignon Blanc from Clare Valley/ Adelaide Hills, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from the Adelaide Hills; and Gaia, a Bordeaux blend from the Clare Valley. These are all benchmarks. His quietly spoken manner conceals a steely will, exemplified by his long and ultimately successful battle to prevent the use of 'Riesling' on flagons and bottles as a generic description, rather than varietal, and his subsequent success in having the Clare Valley Riesling makers migrate en masse to screwcaps, unleashing a torrent of change across Australia.

Clare Valley Adelaide Hills Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 2008

As ever, a totally delicious and beautifully moulded mouthful of wine, the two components seamlessly woven in a citrus/stone fruit web tied up with gentle acidity. Screwcap. 13% alc. **Rating 95 To 2012**

Gaia 2006

Pristine colour; a complex and appealing mix of red and blackcurrant, black olive, a dash of herbs, and beautifully handled oak; the palate is surprisingly generous and open knit, but offers a long, fine, ample and seductive fine-grained tannin finish; beautiful balance, as befits the name. Screwcap. 14% alc. **Rating 95 To 2020**

Polish Hill Riesling 2008

A spotlessly clean and pure bouquet foreshadows an immaculately crafted palate, with a mix of lime, green apple and mineral flavours; iron fist in a velvet glove. Screwcap. 13% alc. **Rating 96 To 2028**

Springvale Watervale Riesling 2008

A slightly more effusive bouquet than the Polish Hill, the expressive lime juice fruit flavours likewise making this wine ready right from the word go, without compromising its ability to age. Screwcap. 13% alc. **Rating 96 To 2020**

Piccadilly Adelaide Hills Chardonnay 2007

A pronounced grilled nut aroma complements the fresh pear fruit on the bouquet; there is a little bit of grip to the palate, with more toasted, nutty complexity framing the gentle pear flavour; quite savoury on the finish. Screwcap. 13.5% alc. **Rating 91 To 2013**

Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir 2007

Clove, cinnamon and a touch of mint; quite dark-fruited, with lots of flavour, but moving toward dry red; finishes with a dried herb complexity. Screwcap. 14% alc. **Rating 89 To 2011**

JOHN DUVAL WINES ★★★★★

J O H N
D U V A L
W I N E S

John Duval is an internationally recognised winemaker, having been the custodian of Penfolds Grange for almost 30 years as part of his role as chief red winemaker at Penfolds. He remains involved with Penfolds as a consultant, but these days is concentrating on establishing his own brand, and providing consultancy services to other clients in various parts of the world. On the principle 'if not broken, don't fix', he is basing his business on Shiraz and Shiraz blends from old-vine vineyards in the Barossa Valley. The brand name Plexus, incidentally, denotes a network in an animal body that combines elements into a coherent structure.

Eligo Barossa Valley Shiraz 2006

Dense but bright colour; has perfectly pitched blackberry, plum fruit and French oak on both the bouquet and medium- to full-bodied palate, with a very long finish. Cork. 15% alc. **Rating 95 To 2016**

Entity Barossa Valley Shiraz 2007

A fragrant bouquet and high-toned palate, quality oak an essential part of the wine; an almost European restraint in its make-up. Screwcap. 14.5% alc. **Rating 94 To 2017**

Plexus Barossa Valley Shiraz Grenache Mourvedre 2007

Bright, but light, colour; a fragrant bouquet of red fruits is replicated on the light- to medium-bodied palate, backed by gossamer fine, savoury tannins. Screwcap. 14.5% alc. **Rating 93 To 2015**

LIBERTY WINES

MITOLO WINES ★★★★★



Frank Mitolo began making wine in 1995 as a hobby, and soon progressed to undertaking formal studies in winemaking. His interest grew year by year, and in 2000 he took the plunge into the commercial end of the business, retaining Ben Glaetzer to make the wines. Since that time, a remarkably good series of wines have been released. Imitation being the sincerest form of flattery, part of the complicated story behind each label name is pure Torbreck, but Mitolo then adds a Latin proverb or saying to the name. The 2007 vintage has left its mark.

Savitar McLaren Vale Shiraz 2007

Dense, deep purple-crimson; full-bodied, with rich and luscious plum, blackberry and dark chocolate is supported by good oak and appropriate tannins. Screwcap. 15% alc. **Rating 94 To 2020**

G.A.M. McLaren Vale Shiraz 2007

Strong colour; dusty/bitter chocolate aromas lead into a powerful wine. Screwcap. 15% alc. **Rating 90 To 2017**

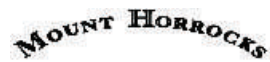
Jester McLaren Vale Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

Light but bright and clear colour; a mix of blackcurrant, savoury black olive and bitter chocolate aromas and flavours; restrained oak. Screwcap. 14.5% alc. **Rating 90 To 2014**

Jester McLaren Vale Shiraz 2007

Loaded with sweet red and black fruits, fruitcake spice and a lively juicy personality; the palate is fleshy, full and quite chewy on the finish. Screwcap. 14.5% alc. **Rating 90 To 2016**

MOUNT HORROCKS ★★★★★



Mount Horrocks has well and truly established its own identity in recent years, aided by positive marketing and, equally importantly, wine quality, which has resulted in both show success and critical acclaim. Stephanie Toole has worked long and hard to achieve this, and I strongly advise you (or anyone else) not to get in her way.

Clare Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2006

As expected, a far purer and more elegant expression of cabernet than any others from the region (except for Grosset Gaia); juicy blackcurrant and cassis fruit is cradled in the finest of tannins and quality French oak. Screwcap. **Rating 95 Drink 2021**

Clare Valley Semillon 2008

In a 100% barrel ferment style unique to the Clare Valley, Mitchell and Tim Adams other notable makers; the strength of the lemony citrus fruit absorbs the impact of the oak; complex food style; good length and balance. Screwcap. 13.5% alc. **Rating 94 To 2015**

Watervale Shiraz 2007

Bright crimson; a super-fragrant bouquet of red berry fruits changes direction on the spicy/savoury palate with fine tannins providing framework for the red berry fruits at the heart of the wine. Screwcap. 14% alc. **Rating 94 To 2017**

Cordon Cut Riesling 2008

Glowing yellow-green; stacked to the rafters with preserved lime and lime juice flavours, the acidity perfectly balanced. Screwcap. 11% alc. **Rating 93 To 2014**

Watervale Riesling 2008

Light bright green-gold; complex aromas of lime and subliminal toast. Screwcap. 12.5% alc. **Rating 91 To 2016**

PLANTAGENET ★★★★★



The senior winery in the Mount Barker region, making superb wines across the full spectrum of variety and style: highly aromatic Riesling, tangy citrus-tinged Chardonnay, glorious Rhône-style Shiraz and ultra-stylish Cabernet Sauvignon.

Great Southern Riesling 2008

Incredibly tight lemon fruit, and a super-strong core of minerality; there is also a touch of exotic fruit on the palate, but the line and length suggest great longevity. Screwcap. 11.5% alc. **Rating 94 To 2025**

Great Southern Shiraz 2007

A ripe and savoury bouquet with redcurrant and blackberry, framed by mineral complexity and a little roasted meat; the palate is quite chewy in texture, but has a liveness to the fruit that draws out the very long, and quite juicy conclusion. Screwcap. 14.5% alc. **Rating 94 To 2020**

Mount Barker Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

Strong crimson-purple; classic Great Southern cabernet; while it has fully ripe and lush blackcurrant fruit, there is also a savoury/spicy cool climate twist to the finish; has good length and balance. Screwcap. 14.5% alc. **Rating 94 To 2022**

Great Southern Chardonnay 2007

Loaded with sweet nectarine fruit and a slight pine element; toasty and rich with a strong mineral component coming to the fore. Screwcap. 13.5% alc. **Rating 90 To 2013**

Omrah Cabernet Merlot 2006

Very good varietal expression of the two varieties ranging through red and black berry fruits; exceptional for the vintage, especially the tannin structure. Screwcap. 14% alc. **Rating 90 To 2015**

Omrah Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Straw-green; the palate opens quietly, but progressively builds tropical fruit flavours through to the emphatic finish. Screwcap. 13.5% alc. **Rating 89 To 2010**

Omrah Unoaked Chardonnay 2008

One of the pioneers of unoaked chardonnay; aromatic, verging tropical, with a brisk citrus finish. Screwcap. 13.5% alc. **Rating 87 To 2010**

Omrah Shiraz 2006

Lively, supple, light- to medium-bodied wine, with a mix of black and red fruits; good balance. Screwcap. 14% alc. **Rating 87 To 2013**

S.C. PANNELL ★★★★★



The only surprising piece of background is that it took (an admittedly still reasonably youthful) Stephen Pannell (and wife Fiona) so long to cut the painter from Constellation/Hardys and establish their own winemaking and consulting business. Steve radiates intensity, and extended experience backed by equally long experimentation and thought has resulted in wines of the highest quality right from the first vintage. At present the focus of their virtual winery (they own neither vineyards nor winery) is Grenache and Shiraz grown in McLaren Vale. This is a label well on its way to icon status.

McLaren Vale Shiraz Grenache 2007

Bright crimson; an exercise in restrained elegance, with spicy/savoury elements to the fore, and a long, perfectly balanced palate, co-fermentation and French oak wrapping up the parcel to perfection. Screwcap. 14% alc. **Rating 94 To 2020**

Adelaide Hills Nebbiolo 2007

True Nebbiolo colour brick colour; restrained with red fruit and a touch of sage; the palate is strict, firm and high acid; complex and intriguing, and a good example of the variety. Screwcap. 14% alc. **Rating 90 To 2015**

Adelaide Hills Pronto Tinto 2007

Doubtless a deliberate choice of light-bodied material to fashion a savoury, but ready to drink, style for consumption with tapas. Garnacha/Monastrell/Syrah/Touriga. Screwcap. 14% alc. **Rating 89 To 2011**

SHAW & SMITH ★★★★★

SHAW & SMITH

Has progressively moved from a contract grapegrown base to estate production with the development of a vineyard at Balhannah, followed in 2000 by a state-of-the-art, beautifully designed and executed winery, which ended the long period of tenancy at Petaluma. From a single wine (Sauvignon Blanc) operation, it now makes three benchmark wines (Sauvignon Blanc, M3 Chardonnay and Shiraz) and smaller quantities of cellar door specialities (Riesling and Pinot Noir), all of the highest quality.

Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir 2007

Positive red-purple hue; aromatic spice, berry and sous bois fruit on the bouquet translates into a generous palate, with plenty of ripe fruit running through the long finish. Screwcap. 13.5% alc. **Rating 94 To 2015**

Adelaide Hills Shiraz 2006

Brilliant crimson, voluminous plum, black cherry and spice aromas, replayed on the very intense and focused palate, which has glorious length and line. Screwcap. 14% alc. **Rating 97 To 2020**

Adelaide Hills Shiraz 2007

Deep crimson-purple; a classy bouquet promises spicy black fruits and quality oak which the medium- to full-bodied palate delivers in spades, with layers of flavour and perfect balance; right up there with the great '06. Screwcap. 14% alc. **Rating 96 To 2027**

M3 Vineyard Adelaide Hills Chardonnay 2007

A beautifully crafted wine with great depth and power; incredibly rich, with lashings of fine French oak and stone fruits; the depth and power is offset by lively acidity, and a complex mineral core. Screwcap. 13% alc. **Rating 96 To 2017**

M3 Vineyard Adelaide Hills Chardonnay 2008

A fragrant bouquet of nectarine, white peach and a hint of citrus rind leads into a vibrant, fresh and very long palate; you know the French oak is there, but it speaks very quietly. Screwcap. 13.5%. **Rating 96 To 2018**

Adelaide Hills Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Builds up its flavour profile progressively through to a rich mid- and back-palate, with flavours in the tropical/gooseberry range; good length and balance. Screwcap. 13% alc. **Rating 93 To 2011**

WILLIAM DOWNIE ★★★★★



William Downie spends six months each year making wine in Burgundy, the other six based in the Yarra Valley with De Bortoli. He uses purchased grapes from older vines to make the wines, avoiding the use of pumps, filtration and fining. The striking label, designed by artist Reg Mombassa, has helped obtain listings at The Prince Wine Store and elsewhere. In the 2006 Gourmet Traveller Wine Winemaker of the Year Awards, Bill Downie was awarded the Kemeny's Medal for the Best Young Winemaker 2006. His boss at De Bortoli, Stephen Webber, goes a little further when he says, 'Downie is the best winemaker in Australia'.

Yarra Valley Pinot Noir 2008

The most developed colour of the three William Downie pinots; a mix of red fruits and spice on the bouquet leads into a distinctly savoury/forestry palate courtesy of fine tannins; has excellent length. Diam. 13.5% alc. **Rating 94 To 2016**

Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir 2008

Good colour; a lively and supple wine from start to finish, yet with tangy elements in the fruit flavour spectrum; silky mouthfeel and finish. Diam. 13.5% alc. **Rating 94 To 2016**

WILLUNGA 100 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



WILLUNGA 100

This is a joint venture between Liberty Wines UK, a well-known importer of quality wines from Australia and UK industry veteran John Ratcliffe. It is a grape-to-retail venture, the foundation being grapes supplied by 400 hectares of McLaren Vale vineyards, with a particular emphasis on Viognier, Shiraz, Grenache and Cabernet Sauvignon. Has hit the scene running with outstanding value for money.

McLaren Vale Cabernet Shiraz 2006

Brilliant colour; medium- to full-bodied; has abundant black fruits in a positive palate with good drive and complexity; ripe tannins and good oak handling. Screwcap. 14% alc. **Rating 94 To 2016**

McLaren Vale Shiraz Viognier 2006

The colour is not as brilliant as the blend normally gives, but the bouquet certainly has the fragrance; the palate is rich and juicy, with plush plum and blackberry fruit, the tannins soft and round. Screwcap. 14.5% alc. **Rating 92 To 2010**

McLaren Vale Grenache 2006

Voluminous juicy fruit aromas and flavours are unequivocally varietal. Screwcap. 14.5% alc. **Rating 90 To 2009**
