

Southern Starz Australian Wines From Issue #148 (Sept. 03)

PRODUCER	SCORE
BARNADOWN RUN	
Barnadown Run 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon: Tremendous quantities of crème de cassis fruit, medium to full body, outstanding purity, and a long, textured, impressive finish.	89-91
Barnadown Run 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon: The dark ruby/purple-colored 2001 reveals notes of minerals and black currants. Noticeably firm and tannic, with an austere finish, it should drink well for a decade or longer.	88-90
Barnadown Run 2001 Henry Bennett's Voluptuary: 60% Shiraz, 25% Cabernet sauvignon, and 15% Malbec. Its dense, thick purple color is followed by earthy herbal, red as well as black fruit aromas, medium body, and decent acidity.	87
Barnadown Run 2001 Merlot: A sophisticated example of this varietal. Notes of coffee, chocolate, berry fruit, and herbs are present in this dark ruby-colored, medium-bodied, nicely textured offering.	87
Barnadown Run 2002 Shiraz: An inky/purple color is followed by fabulous fruit intensity and purity as well as tremendous persistence on the palate, and a full-bodied, opulent style that conceals the wine's acidity, tannin, and wood aging.	89-92
Barnadown Run 2001 Shiraz: Exhibits sweet jammy blackberry fruit as well as surprising elegance (due to its good acidity), fine density, and a European-like flavor/textural profile.	89
BIRCHWOOD	
Birchwood 2001 Shiraz "Decades": An oaky, sweet, plump, fleshy, classic McLaren Vale Shiraz. Birchwood's 2001 Decades exhibits a deep ruby/purple color in addition to aromas and flavors of compost, earth and wood. Muscle and obvious glycerin are also present.	88
BLEASDALE	
Bleasdale Vineyards 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Mulberry Tree: Another terrific bargain. It reveals notes of spice box cedar, black currants, and tobacco in a medium to full-bodied, dense, rich format. With sweet tannin along with well-integrated wood and acidity, this plump, fleshy, well-made Cabernet should drink well for 7-8 years. It doesn't take a genius to realize that a \$15 Cabernet Sauvignon of this quality is nearly impossible to find domestically.	89
Bleasdale Vineyards 2001 Cabernet/Shiraz Langhorne Crossing: A superb value, the 2001 Cabernet/Shiraz Langhorne Crossing (is a blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Shiraz) exhibits a deep ruby color in addition to fragrant aromas of blackberry, cassis, and licorice. Lush, with excellent purity, a fine texture and soft tannin, it will provide enjoyment over the next 5-6 years.	88
Bleasdale Vineyards 2001 Frank Potts Proprietary Red: A Bordeaux blend of 59% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Malbec, and the rest Petit Verdot and Merlot, the 2001 Frank Potts's dense saturated purple color is followed by a juicy, earthy bouquet of crème de cassis, tobacco, spice box and a hint of Provencal herbs. Dense and full-bodied, with terrific fruit purity, a lush texture and a long concentrated finish, its low acidity, ripe tannin and wealth of fruit suggest early accessibility, but it has the potential to last for 10-12+ years.	91
Bleasdale Vineyards 2001 Shiraz Bemerview: Boasts a dense ruby/purple color as well as a big, peppery, sweet nose of blackberries and currants with notions of underbrush and earth in the background. Ripe, fleshy, and hedonistic.	89
Bleasdale Vineyards 2002 Shiraz/Cabernet: Readers looking for more mint/eucalyptus characteristics should check out the 2002 Shiraz/Cabernet, a heady concoction revealing copious quantities of black currant fruits along with the tell-tale mint. This impressively endowed, nicely textured, dense concentrated offering reveals the strength of this vintage in South Australia. Potentially	88-90

bigger and richer than its 2001 counterpart, it will drink well for 4-7 years.

Bleasdale Vineyards 1999 Shiraz Petrel Reserve: The 1999 Shiraz Petrel Reserve exhibits creamy American oak notes interwoven with minty, earthy, full-bodied, black fruit flavors. Although monolithic, it is loads of fun to taste and drink. Moreover,, it manages to conceal its lofty 14.5% alcohol. Drink it over the next 7-8 years. **89**

Bleasdale Vineyards 2000 Shiraz Reserve: Lastly the most expensive wine in the Bleasdale portfolio, the saturated, ruby/purple colored 2000 Shiraz Reserve, reveals plenty of creamy vanillin from new oak and loads of ripe fruit, but not the complexity expected in a wine priced twice as high. It may need more time to settle down. At present it is chewy, ripe and plump. Drink it over the next 5-8 years. **89**

Bleasdale Vineyards 2002 Verdelho: The tank fermented and aged 2002 Verdelho is a light-bodied, crisp, refreshing dry white meant to be consumed over the next year. It will drink beautifully with seafood dishes. **86**

R. L. BULLER

R. L. Buller N.V. Calliope Rare Muscat: Boasts a deep, dark amber color as well as layers of flavor and constantly changing aromatics of brown sugar, fig, molasses and Lord Knows what else, it is an extraordinary beverage. **100**

R. L. Buller N.V. Calliope Rare Tokay: Revealed a dense amber color, but not quite the colossal aromatic and flavored authority of its sibling. Nevertheless, it is spectacular stuff offering notes of maple syrup, fruit macerated in cognac, and hints of toffee, caramel, etc. **98**

R. L. Buller N.V. Premium Fine Muscat: Offers terrific aromas of brown sugar, molasses and maple syrup, great persistence on the palate and a tremendous finish. For the price, it's a steal! **94**

R. L. Buller N.V. Premium Fine Tawny: Also a knock out, reveals smoky, spicy, nutty notes intermixed with caramel and marmalade characteristics. **92**

R. L. Buller N.V. Victoria Tawny: Exhibits a medium ruby/amber color as well as plenty of strawberry and cherry fruit. **88**

CASCABEL

Cascabel 2001 Grenache Et Al: Made in a European-oriented wine making style the 2001 comes across as a serious imitation of a French Cotes du Rhone. Notes of white pepper, kirsch liqueur, and pine/resiny notes emerge from this deep ruby-colored effort. With loads of fruit and spice, a medium-bodied texture and a long persistent, supple finish. **89**

Cascabel 2001 Shiraz Fleurieu: Impressive! Reveals surprising elegance for a South Australia wine as well as a bouquet of sweet blackberries and currants intermixed with hints of licorice, camphor and damp earth. With beautiful texture, elegance and a medium to full-bodied finish with well-integrated tanning and acidity. **90**

Cascabel 2001 Tempranillo/Graciano: An innovative blend of Tempranillo and Graciano the 2001 (the first blend of these grapes I have tasted from the New World) boasts a dense ruby/purple color along with a big, smoky sweet, briery, berry perfume reminiscent of a top flight Zinfandel. Ripe and medium-bodied, with good density, purity and overall harmony. **89**

CRANEFORD

Craneford 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon: Reveals the vintage's opaque purple color along with glorious aromas of blackberries, minerals, toast, creosole, and spice box. Dense and chewy with abundant quantities of fat and glycerin concealing the wine's tannin, it is a voluptuous Cabernet that may be even better than its current score indicates. **91+**

Craneford 2002 Grenache: The deep ruby/purple colored 2002 Grenache (from 97 year old vines) boasts a terrific perfume of exotic spices interwoven with hints of Chinese black tea, raspberries and kirsch liqueur. Dense and full-bodied with great fruit purity as well as a blockbuster finish. **92**

Craneford 2002 Merlot: Surprise, surprise, the 2002 Merlot is knock out stuff. Its opaque purple color is accompanied by juicy aromas of roasted coffee, chocolate, integrated acidity. **95**

Craneford 2002 Petit Verdot: Petit Verdot can rarely stand on its own, but Craneford's 2002 is an inky/blue/purple-colored offering displaying notes of incense, liquid minerals, black fruits and damp earth. This stunning wine looks to be one of the finest Petit Verdots I have ever tasted. **92+**

Craneford 2002 Quartet Proprietary Red: Proprietary blend of 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Petit Verdot, 25% Cabernet Franc and 10% Shiraz, the 2001 Quartet exhibits a deep ruby/purple color in addition to a beautiful bouquet of tobacco-infused black currants, toasty oak, and sweet licorice. Ripe, rich, medium to full-bodied and surprisingly elegant as well as measured on the palate with a long persistent tannic finish. **91**

EPPALOCK RIDGE

Eppalock Ridge 2002 Cabernet/Merlot: The vintages tremendous quality is evident in the saturated color, huge crème de cassis and licorice scented bouquet, and dense, opulent, voluptuous, full-bodied flavors. A terrific offering. **89-92**

Eppalock Ridge 2001 Cabernet/Merlot: Aged in both French and American oak, the dense ruby/purple-colored Cabernet/Merlot (60/40) exhibits aromas of chocolate, currant, and earth in a slightly herbal, but chewy style with good integration of tannin as well as acidity. **89**

Eppalock Ridge 2002 Shiraz: also, impressive, the inky/bleu/purple colored 2002 Shiraz reveals great intensity along with a big, sweet nose of black fruits intermixed with figs, pepper, and a hint of wood. Chewy and thick, this is a classic Australian. **90-92**

Eppalock Ridge 2001 Shiraz: Boasts a saturated dark ruby/purple color, medium to full body, ripe, concentrated, earthy black fruit flavors, impressive purity and a long seamless finish. **90**

KOONOWLA

Koonowla 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon: The outstanding 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon is a fragrant, elegant perfumed effort displaying notes of blueberries and creme de cassis. Medium-bodied, with loads of concentration and a distinctive, singular style. **90**

Koonowla 1998 Cabernet Sauvignon: Pure, vivid expression of this varietal with its creme de cassis, weedy herb, spice box and cedar characteristics. It boasts and opaque ruby/garnet color, beautiful fruit and excellent mid-palate and admirable balance. **89**

Koonowla 2001 Shiraz: Reveals an elegant side to its medium-bodied, deep black cherry, cassis and tar-like flavors. There is good sweetness on the attack and mid-palate, as well as a sense of restraint and overall harmony. **89**

KURTZ FAMILY

Kurtz Family Winery 2002 Grenache/Shiraz Boundary Row: The 2002 Grenache/Shiraz Boundary Row (90/10) tips the scales at 16% alcohol, all of which is well concealed by a wealth of black cherry, raspberry, grapy flavors as well as thrilling levels of opulence and glycerin,. Voluptuous, full-bodied, and gorgeously pure and fruit driven, this is knock-out stuff! At this price, consumers should be lining up for a few bottles ... heck, Id pay three times the price for a Grenache this good! **93**

Kurtz Family Winery 2001 Shiraz Boundary Row: Another big, bold, exuberant, muscular effort from the Barossa. A dense purple color is followed by a full-bodied, classic Barossa Shiraz revealing notes of creamy oak intermingled with blackberries, cassis, licorice and spice box presented in a full-throttle, balls to the walls style. **93**

LONGWOOD ESTATE

Longwood Estate 2002 Shiraz: Exhibits a spectacular nose of peppery blackberry fruit, an opulent, concentrated, thick, muscular palate, and a long, pure finish with loads of fruit and glycerin nearly concealing the tannin. **91**

Longwood Estate 2002 Shiraz Reserve: Possesses all of the above in addition to more structure, oak, and flavor intensity. Supple and accessible, with low acidity as well as a blockbuster finish. **93**

MARGAN FAMILY

Margan Family Winery 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon: The 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon is lean but competent and well made. **85**

Margan Family Winery 2001 Merlot: Deep ruby color, juicy mocha-infused berry fruit. With excellent freshness and zestiness, it is a surprisingly strong effort and as well as noteworthy value. **88**

Margan Family Winery 2002 Semillon: Loaded with citrus, lime and melon fruit, this medium-bodied exuberant, zesty, lush pure white is a total hedonistic as well as intellectual turn-on. **90**

Margan Family Winery 2002 Semillon Botrytis: offers up impressive aromas of orange marmalade, coconut and creme brulee. With good acidity loads of flavor and medium bodied, moderately sweet (not cloying) style. **91**

Margan Family Winery 2002 Shiraz: Reveals the vintages power and ripeness along with gorgeous balance. It is an uncomplex, fruit driven, medium-bodied effort that , like its siblings will drink well during the first 2-3 years of life. **87**

Margan Family Winery 2003 Shiraz Saignee: The framboise-scented and flavored 2003 Shiraz Saignee exhibits a light ruby color as well s loads of fruit and surprisingly good body. It is meant to be **87**

consumed during its first 6-9 months of life.

Margan Family Winery 2002 Verdelho: Margan's 2002 may be the finest Verdelho I have ever tasted. Its fragrant floral honeysuckle and lemon like perfume is superb. Beautifully-textured, medium-bodied, and loaded with all the right stuff, it will provide immense pleasure over the next year.

90

NUGAN FAMILY

Nugan Family Estate 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon: Possesses excellent fruit purity and texture in addition to plenty of varietal character in its tobacco-edged, creme de cassis aromatics and flavor profile. It is moderately tannic, medium-bodied and filled with fruit.

88

Nugan Family Estate 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Alcira Vineyard: Reveals austerity as well as herbaceous characteristics, there is plenty of smoky, earthy, black currant fruit offered in a French style.

86-88

Nugan Family Estate 2002 Chardonnay: With copious quantities of tropical fruit, the Maconnais-like, 2002 Chardonnay should be consumed over the next year.

85

Nugan Family Estate 2002 Chardonnay Alcira Vineyard: From a Coonawarra vineyard the French-inspired 2002 Chardonnay Alcira Vineyard's nicely integrated subtle wood, mineral, and tropical fruit notes as well as natural acidity give it a medium to full-bodied Chablis-like personality.

89

Nugan Family Estate 2002 Durif Mauka Grove: Rustic and tannic but impressive is the 2002 Durif Mauka Grove. This dense bleu/purple-colored Petite-Sirah will be a hit with lovers of full throttle, muscular, tannic wines big on structure.

88

Nugan Family Estate 2002 Shiraz: A knock-out value, the 2002 offers loads of blackberry fruit characteristics intertwined with notes of licorice and camphor. Dense and medium to full-bodied, with outstanding purity as well as flavor, it should drink well for 3-4 years.

89

Nugan Family Estate 2002 Shiraz Alcira Vineyard: Its saturated purple color is followed by thick muscular juicy black currant and blackberry flavors nicely dosed with wood and spice, Full-bodied, chewy, and heady.

89-91

OLIVERHILL

Oliverhill 2002 Grenache Bradey Block: Exhibits subtle notions of creamy oak in its sumptuous bouquets of black raspberries and sweet cherry jam. Powerful, full-bodied and voluptuous, it is loaded from beginning to end. The 16% alcohol is buried beneath a cascade of fruit and glycerin in this decadently hedonistic South Australian offering.

91

Oliverhill 2002 Shiraz Jimmy Section: A stunningly proportioned opaque purple-colored offering displaying notes of melted licorice interwoven with creme de cassis, hickory smoke, and licorice. Layered and chewy, it is the antitheses of a wimpy wine.

94

OX

Ox 2001 Shiraz: From what is alleged to be the oldest vineyard in McLaren Vale (116 years old in 2001); this surprisingly restrained yet magically concentrated Shiraz was playing it close to the vest when I tasted it. While unquestionably concentrated, thick and rich, it appears to possess lower alcohol as well as a less exaggerated style than many of its peers.

92+

PASSING CLOUDS

Passing Clouds 2001 Shiraz: Well-integrated wood, a dense ruby/purple color, and sweet tannin characterize this chunky, monolithic, but plump, fleshy Shiraz.

88

REILLY'S

Reilly's 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon: Both the 2001 and 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon are well-made, elegant and French like in their restraint. The 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon ratchets things up several notches with greater fruit intensity, more body and additional persistence on the palate. Both are notable for their measured, earth, licorice, and black currant aromas as well as flavors, nicely integrated wood, and impressive finishes.

89-91

Reilly's 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon

87

Reilly's 2002 Grenache/Shiraz 1919 Block: Potentially stunning, the 2002 Grenache./Shiraz 1919 Block is a blend of (88% Grenache and 12 % Shiraz). A Clare Valley fruit bomb, it boasts a dense ruby/purple color as well as pure raspberry, black cherry, and currant fruit, full body and a layered texture. It will be drinkable upon release, and should last for 7-8 years. Moreover, it has the markings of a top-flight bargain.

89-91

Reilly's 2003 Riesling Watervale: Displaying hints of petrol, white peaches, and under-ripe apricots, this dry, medium-bodied, impeccably well made white will drink well over the next 1-2 years.

88

Reilly's 2001 Shiraz Dry Land: The foursquare monochromatic 2001 Dry Land Shiraz possesses good color and weight but lacks the charm and depth of fruit found in this vintage.	86
Reilly's 2001 Shiraz Stolen Block: The sensational 2001 exhibits a dense ruby/purple color in addition to concentrated blackberry liqueur noted intermixed with melted licorice, pepper and a hint of wood. This stunningly proportioned, thick, juicy Shiraz will provide enjoyment during its first 10-11 years of life.	92

ROSS ESTATE

Ross Estate 2001 Cabernet Blend Lyndoch: Revealing additional notes of cedar, earth, spice and black currant fruit, the 2001 Cabernet Blend "Lyndoch" possesses classic Cabernet flavors of cassis and tobacco, excellent purity and a long finish. I may have underrated this impressive offering. Like all Ross Estate wines it is fairly priced.	89
Ross Estate 2001 Cabernet/Merlot Northridge: An excellent value the 2001 Cabernet/Merlot Northridge offers elegant aromas and flavor of red and black currants intermixed with cedar and spice box. Fruity with good body, supple tannin and a lusty heady finish, it will drink well for 3-4 years.	88
Ross Estate 2002 Grenache: The 2002 Grenache, also a <u>noteworthy value</u> is modestly alcoholic by Barossa Valley standards (only 14.5%). This dense ruby/purple colored offering exhibits framboise and kirsch notes along with hints of licorice as well as pepper. Chewy and plump, it is a fruit cocktail filled with glycerin. Drink this hedonistic Grenache over the next 2-3 years.	90
Ross Estate 2001 Shiraz: The 2001 Shiraz is also an attractive value. Pure blackberry fruit emerges from this deep ruby/purple-colored, full bodied, chewy effort. It will offer an exuberant mouthful of gorgeous Shiraz over the next 5-6 years.	90
Ross Estate 2001 Shiraz Reserve: A powerful, muscular, layered, inky/purple colored cuvee with huge body, extraction and richness. Fashioned by owner/winemaker Rod Chapman (who was responsible for 15 vintages of the renowned Penfold's Grange under the tutelage of Grange's founder Max Schumbert) it is an impressive Shiraz the likes of which normally sell for 2-3 times the price.	93

ST. MARY'S

St. Mary's 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon House Block: St. Mary's offerings reveal a French-inspired orientation in their restrained personalities with herbal undertones to the measured red and black currant fruit. The 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon House Block also offers medium-bodied flavors displaying traces of cedar, licorice and French oak.	87
St. Mary's 2001 Shiraz: Atypically polite, understated and restrained. Nevertheless, it is a pleasant straightforward, foursquare, easy-going Australian red to enjoy during its first 4-5 years of life.	86

STRATHEWEN HILLS

Strathewen Hills 2002 Shiraz Patterson Lakes: The dense ruby/purple-colored 2002 exhibits elegant, soft yet complex flavors of black fruits intermixed with licorice as well as high-class French oak. Emphasizing subtlety and restraint rather than the unbridled power Australian Shiraz often represents.	89
Strathewen Hills 2001 Shiraz Tribal Elder: The deep, rich 2001 boasts a dense ruby/purple color as well as a sweet perfume of creme de cassis, blackberries, vanilla and coffee. Still young, unformed, and primary, it may merit a higher rating with another 2-3 years of bottle age.	90+

SYLVAN SPRINGS

Sylvan Springs 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon: These mainstream, fruit driven reds lack complexity, but are juicy offering meant for uncritical quaffing. They possess oodles of fruit good winemaking and faithfulness to their varietal and aromatic/flavor profiles. Both are best consumed over the next 2-3 years.	86
Sylvan Springs 2001 Shiraz	87

TAIT

Tait 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon: Also outstanding, this deep, chewy, impressive 2001 plays it closer to the vest, but it is an extracted, rich, concentrated Cabernet revealing a thick ruby/purple color as well as plenty of cassis fruit intermixed with oak and spice box notes.	90
Tait 2001 Shiraz: Should have been named the "Super Ball Buster". Classic Barossa Shiraz, it boasts a dense purple color in addition to a huge nose of melted tar intermixed with pepper, blackberry liqueur and a ninth of wood. Full bodied with loads of glycerin and a monster finish.	93
Tait 2002 The Ball Buster Proprietary Red: Deep ruby/purple colored blend of Shiraz, Cabernet	92

Sauvignon and Merlot reveals a knock-out nose of creosol, tar, blackberries and cassis. This thick juicy, in your face red is not for those who enjoy European restraint and delicacy. However, readers looking for hedonistic, full throttle thrill a sip beverage will enjoy this awesome wine, particularly at \$15.

TWELVE STAVES

Twelve Staves 2002 Grenache: From this small estate known for its old vines the 2002 Grenache (from 80 year old vines) is an impressive effort displaying loads of cherry and raspberry fruit, immense body, outstanding purity and a long concentrated, textured finish. It's up front as well as ready for prime time drinking. **89**

Twelve Staves 2002 Shiraz: The dense inky/purple colored Shiraz (65 year old vines) boasts thick juicy blackberry and cassis flavors that are pure and striking in their power and overall balance. This accessible offering displays the seamlessness that a great vintage in South Australia possess. **90**

WATER WHEEL

Water Wheel 2002 Memsie Proprietary Red: A proprietary blend of Shiraz, Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon is the first Australian red I have seen with a screw cap closure. A wonderful value, its deep ruby/purple color is followed by copious quantities of flowery blue and black fruits, impressive purity and a nicely textured, medium bodied finish. **88**

Water Wheel 2001 Shiraz: Equally impressive for both quality and value is Water Wheel's 2001 Shiraz. It offers a dense ruby/ purple color as well as peppery , charcoal infused black fruits, medium body and fine purity. **87**

WINTER CREEK

Winter Creek 2002 The Old Barossa Blend: The 2002 The Old Barossa Blend (80% Grenache and 20% Shiraz) is a killer wine value. Deep ruby/purple colored with a sweet nose of peppery blackberry fruit, as well as a chunky, full bodied silky textured palate, it is a thrilling wine for \$19. Moreover, it will evolve and improve for 2-4 years. It is the type of wine readers should buy it the by the cases. **90**

Winter Creek 2002 Shiraz: The spectacular dense black colored 2002 Shiraz boasts sweet creme de cassis and blackberry fruit flavors followed by a voluptuously textured long think, juicy finish. It is another example of how special this vintage in South Australia. **91-93**

Winter Creek 2001 Shiraz: The saturated ruby/pruple colored 2001 is an outstanding example of Barossa Shiraz with its earth, pepper and black fruit characteristics, Full-bodied and impeccably well made with well integrated wood acidity tannin and alcohol, it will drink well for 5-10 years. **90**

