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# Wine & Spirits



## AUSSIE SEA CHANGE

*Fresh varieties for the future climate*

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# ALTERNATE [VARIETY] REALITY



ANCIENT GRENACHE VINES AT RICHARD AND CARLA RZA BETTS'S VINE VALE VINEYARD





*South Australia's Climate  
Certainty Transformed  
into Delicate Reds*

by JOSHUA GREENE



# M

CLAREN VALE LOOKS a lot like a young British schoolboy's fever dream of the Mediterranean. Or so you might be led to believe by Chester Osborn, decked out in his brightly patterned shirts and his British rock star's curly blond locks. But this is, in fact, Osborn's reality: An inheritance of ancient basket presses for the fruit of his family's centenary

grenache and shiraz vines, a collection expanded with the near-abandoned vineyards he recovered in the 1980s and '90s, those dry-farmed vines challenged by droughts of increasing severity, heat to light the bush on fire and the certainty of more extreme weather.

Growers could be forgiven if they allowed the Australian government's dire climate warnings to take them down. The tolling bell is grim around the world, but the Aussie penchant for humble fortitude thrives on the clear statement of facts. The government's climate studies for South Australia predict, with "very high confidence," increasing average temperatures in all seasons, more hot days and warm spells, declines in annual rainfall with increases in the intensity of heavy rains, and—deep breath in—a harsher fire-weather climate.

Osborn long ago began to experiment with vines that might thrive in a warmer, drier climate than his shiraz had known for more than 100 years. He and his father, d'Arry, before him, had relied on those shiraz vines as the source of their livelihood, particularly when d'Arry shifted the family's reliance on fortified wines to a focus on table wines in the 1960s. The vineyards d'Arry's grandfather, Joseph, had acquired in 1912 had been planted with fortified wines in mind. And, in the 1960s, the climate was right for shiraz to take the lead in table wine, as grenache didn't offer the same depth of color and needed more time to adequately ripen.

On video feed from his office overlooking the Peppermint Paddock at d'Arenberg, Osborn recalled how his father developed the family's portfolio around shiraz. "Dad's early-picked shiraz made the Claret," he told me. "Middle-picked shiraz made the Shiraz, and late-picked shiraz went with a heap of grenache (70 percent of the blend) to make the Burgundy." That last wine became shiraz-dominant in the 1970s, closer to 50-50, always with a little more shiraz than grenache, and it remained that way when Chester starting making it in the 1980s and

later, when he dropped the Burgundy label and rechristened the wine as d'Arry's Original.

Recently, facing down a 50-year tradition, Osborn began to change the blend. "The 2017 d'Arry's Original is the first vintage that's been grenache-dominant since 1998. That was the only other one, in all the years that I've made the d'Arry's Original, or the Burgundy, as it was called originally, they were always shiraz-dominant, except in the 60s, which I wasn't here for. I was here, but annoying my father, probably.

"The 2018 and 19 are even more grenache than what the 2017 was. The 2017 was 55-45. They are going to be more like 70 percent grenache in '18 and '19."

In our recent blind tasting, the 2017 d'Arry's Original was a standout.

It's a great wine in a vintage that may come to be viewed as a turning point for grenache in South Australia.

"Grenache is really trendy now," Osborn reports, with the satisfaction of a longtime supporter. He had bought up grenache vineyards while others were ripping them out during the riesling-and-chardonnay frenzy of the 1980s and '90s.

"Last vintage, grenache outdid shiraz as the most expensive grape variety by average price in McLaren Vale. It's the first time, probably ever, that grenache has overtaken shiraz. Now, only six percent of McLaren Vale plantings are grenache and 56 percent are shiraz, so supply-and-demand is part of it. But there's absolutely no doubt that McLaren Vale grenache has changed since I made it in the 1980s and '90s. As in, climate change has certainly had an influence. The wines have more purple-ness about them, in their fruit character and their color. They were much more in the red, savory, herbally, spiced character in those days. Now, they are much bigger wines.

"Shiraz has changed as well, but for grenache, it's probably been a more positive thing. Where most of the grenache is planted in McLaren Vale, we're about one degree [Celsius] colder than Châteauneuf-du-Pape, so it was probably a little marginal before, and now the wine is a bit darker. We still have our red years, like 2017—quite a cool year, ripened later with much more elegant, red-fruit characters."

Tinkering with the d'Arry's Original blend is only one of the ways Osborn is responding to the increasing variability and extremes in the weather. Currently, he has 37 varieties in the ground, most of them hailing from Mediterranean climates in the south of Italy, France and into Iberia.



CHESTER OSBORN'S MENCIA AT D'ARENBERG  
RIPENS FIVE WEEKS AFTER HIS SHIRAZ.

*"McLaren Vale is going absolutely berserk on new varieties."*

—CHESTER OSBORN, D'ARENBERG

“McLaren Vale is going absolutely berserk on new varieties,” he says with unsuppressed glee, having led the charge starting in the 1990s. At the time, he went all in on viognier when his growers were pushing back on planting more shiraz, for fear of a glut. They wanted to grow white grapes. “I said, Well, don’t plant more chardonnay or riesling or whatever. Viognier could work here. After about two years, I added up the plantings we had and with our growers we had about 140 acres of viognier planted.” That was before he had a crop. Fortunately, viognier worked and he is still buying all the grapes to blend with his own for one of his most successful white wines, The Hermit Crab.

He has since expanded to a range of new red varieties, starting with tempranillo and souzão for his first Sticks and Stones blend in 2002.

When he found the old-vine parcel of souzão, the grower was calling it cinão—maybe cinsault? No, the grower told him, it was Portuguese. As the fruit set he noticed that the grapes were small and the yields were limited: “It looked nothing like cinsault. And it made this wine as black as black can be—really exotic earth characters and really lively minerality. It had acidity and very fine minerality.” A Portuguese grower at a trade show gave him a lead to souzão, and ampelography confirmed it.

Meanwhile, he had planted tempranillo on ancient red-brown soils over limestone, two miles from the coast. “It gets a lot of tannin off that geology,” he has found. “Tempranillo does end up being a relatively tannin-driven wine, still perfumed out the end and not heavy. It has a bright spice, a fragrant red character.” He blended the tempranillo and souzão with old-vine grenache, to lend earthiness to the young-vine fruit for his early Sticks and Stones bottlings. As his tempranillo vines have matured, he finds he needs less of the old-vine grenache for the blend.

In terms of the contemporary climate, the variety that has impressed him for its resilience is mencia. “It just yields no problem and has good vigor. Eight or nine years ago, we grafted some merlot over to mencia and negroamaro, and the negroamaro was even more vigorous. We had two crops of negroamaro, and it was light and fresh; really, it’s just too cold for negroamaro here. But then, even worse, it was too hot at veraison—too much sun and heat—sunburn wiped out 90 percent of the crop two years in a row.” He decided to graft those vines over to mencia—growing right alongside those sunburnt vines, it was untouched. Osborn harvests his mencia a full five weeks after shiraz, and the fruit holds its fresh dark-cherry flavors in the wine that he calls The Anthropocene Epoch.

YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE AN AUSSIE to fall in love with contemporary McLaren Vale grenache. It was ancient vines in Barossa, in fact, that caught the attention of an American. Richard Betts was working as a sommelier in the early 2000s when he got turned on to Château Rayas (it wasn’t as expensive as it is today). That wine convinced him that grenache could be “a warm-climate analogy of pinot noir,” he told me in video interview, joined by his wife and winegrowing partner, Carla Rza Betts. “In the best years, you could mistake Rayas for a great Burgundy.” He zeroed in on the sandy soil that made Rayas unique in Châteauneuf-du-Pape and, determined to find a place he could make his own, he went looking for grenache grown in sand in Sardinia, Spain and California.

A wine from a side project made by Chris Ringland, RBJ Theologicum, led Betts to the Barossa, and the Dry Grown Grenache from Robert O’Callaghan at Rockford led him through Ebenezer and Bethany districts to Vine Vale. “Eventually, I found my way to Christian Knute at Rusden, and he was making wine like that, specifically with grenache. And I thought: Here it is; here’s a home. Let’s get started.”

Later, after he and Carla joined forces, they began making An Approach to Relaxation wines, including Sucette, their ancient-vine grenache from Vine Vale. Their 2017, tasted for this issue, shows how old-vine grenache, planted in the right place, may be a predictor of what some of the new, alternate vines might produce as they mature into the decades to come.

It was the year when the Bettses purchased 16 acres of land, including a 10.5-acre plot of vines planted in the late 19th century, growing on their own roots in deep sand.

“We sit at the bottom of the gullies that come down from Eden Valley and the Barossa Ranges into the Vine Vale,” Richard explained. “Over time, quartzite and granite has eroded and come

down through these gullies into this little alluvial fan, this little puddle of sand.

“The sand is almost a visualization of the wind. Those same gullies that deposited the sand bring those cold winds and, yes, they can definitely screw things up at flowering but, at other times, its good for vine health.” The wind also emphasizes the radical shift in temperature from day to night—if it is 100 degrees [Fahrenheit] during the day, winds cascading down the gullies into Vine Vale can drive it down to the mid-50s within an hour after the sun sets. “It makes for a much cooler area than the rest of the Barossa. Once you drive from the Vine Vale out into the



GRANITE SANDS SUSTAIN 19TH-CENTURY GRENACHE VINES AT THE BETTS'S VINE VALE VINEYARD.

*“The sand is almost a visualization of the wind. The same gullies that deposited the sand bring the cold winds.”*

—RICHARD BETTS, AN APPROACH TO RELAXATION



rest of the valley, it gets warm pretty quickly. It's amazing to see what a kilometer will do.

"The past two vintages were nice and warm and sunny. And then '17 was freezing cold." That was the first vintage with the estate parcel, which they found, in fact, because it had gone to them in 2016 without their knowledge, a clandestine substitution by a grower who sold them grapes (but that's a different story). Those ancient vines provided more than half of their Sucette wine in 2017, and increasingly higher percentages in recent harvests. The cold provided the other distinctive ingredient, giving their grenache in granite sands the sort of mysterious freshness and grandeur of the Rockford Basket Press Dry Grown Grenache wines, especially from back in the 1990s.

"I was in three jackets and had gloves on," Carla recalls of the 2017 harvest. "It gets very cold, and people don't tend to pin that next to their idea of the Barossa. It's not a cool climate; let's not get crazy here. But in certain pockets, it has a different temperament than people might assume."

**F**OR A THIRD perspective on the Australian-Mediterranean soul of grenache and its siblings, I spoke with Kate Goodman, winemaker

at Paxton, a biodynamic vineyard in McLaren Vale. Though Dave and Anne Paxton's collection of seven vineyards in McLaren Vale focus mainly on shiraz and grenache, though they are increasing their plantings of new varieties as they sell out of their tempranillo and graciano wines every year.

Goodman joined the team two years ago to provide some outside perspective on their winemaking, or, as she told me in a video interview from her home in McLaren Vale, "to shake things up a bit."

When I complemented her on her 2019, a mineral-driven, red-currant-scented beauty from grenache vines Paxton planted in the 1990s, Goodman began to wax romantic about grenache in McLaren Vale. She also admitted to just having contracted a parcel of 120-year-old dry-grown grenache vines in Blewitt Springs for her own label. "Is it an indulgence?" she asked rhetorically, her determined eyes behind round, owl glasses. "Maybe."

At Paxton, she works with 15 acres of grenache, along with more recent plantings of tempranillo (10.6 acres) and graciano, (3 acres, with another 2.5 in the ground this spring). All of that seems diminutive when compared to Paxton's 163 acres of shiraz. But it also forms a Rioja

triumvirate, especially if you consider that garnacha probably originated in Spain (ground zero believed to be in Aragon), before migrating to southern France and, eventually, to Australia.

When asked if there's any intentional link back to Rioja, Goodman reports that she has worked in Spain with Telmo Rodríguez and that, for David Paxton and his wife, Ang Tolly, Spain has long been a favored destination. Still, she says, "I think our grenache is more Australian than it is Spanish. The style that Paxton has moved to seeks the ethereal perfume and the evocative character you can get from grenache."

Paxton's graciano is also quite different from the variety in Rioja, where a small amount adds tannic structure to a blend with tempranillo and garnacha. Rarely presented on its own in Rioja, where it can be quite mean,

there's some joy in Paxton's graciano from McLaren Vale.

Seven years ago, the Paxtons grafted a row of chardonnay to graciano as an experiment and have been expanding on it since then. "Graciano likes McLaren Vale," Goodman says. "It likes the summer and the heat. When you walk into the vineyard, pre-harvest, tasting grapes, the graciano vines always have a freshness to them. The leaves are green and the canopies still have energy in them. To me, that says they're actually happy, whereas the shiraz can look tired. And graciano is a later-ripening variety, well after shiraz. It takes time for the acid to drop back—and that's coming from someone who loves acidity."

Goodman finds graciano more challenging to grow than tempranillo. "Making the acid and tannin work together, to me, is the biggest challenge of graciano—to have those two components fit together neatly so you can't see the edges of either of them." It ripens later and takes time for the acidity to drop back. "I actually prefer the feel of tempranillo [to graciano]," she says. "I like the tannins and the supple texture you can get—that

almost chocolatey-rose, Turkish-delight character, compared to that full-on pepper in the graciano." She describes tempranillo as more mainstream but says there is a lot of interest in them both. "If we could double production, we could sell it, easily."

Still, it is McLaren Vale's old-vine grenache that has stolen her heart. "Can you believe they pulled out old-vine grenache and planted chardonnay?" she asks, referring to the government sponsored vine pull that began in 1985. "It makes me want to weep. It was the ugly duckling, bulk workhorse. It wasn't treated as grenache, it was treated as a way to make red wine."



THE BUSH-VINE GRENACHE AT DAVID PAXTON'S LANDCROSS FARM.

*"Graciano likes the summer and the heat. Pre-harvest, the leaves are green and the canopies still have energy."*

— KATE GOODMAN, PAXTON WINES

What she's after is the savory balance, the lightness of texture combined with the depth of flavor that she finds in some of her favorite Old-World wines and, increasingly, in McLaren Vale grenache.

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HILE SOUTH AUSTRALIA's ancient grenache vineyards may be responding to climate extremes in delicate and delicious ways, growers planting graciano, tempranillo, mencia and host of other Mediterranean varieties are working with a future climate in mind.

On the hottest days of the year, in the heat of the vast Murray River plain east of Barossa,

you might find Ashley Ratcliff tasting grapes at the Riverland Vine Improvement Committee. "It's just up the road, a repository of hundreds of different varieties that might never have seen a commercial day. If you want to import a vine out of, say, Portugal, they import it, they put three or four vines in." It's his way to keep tabs on the next vine to plant. "Whenever it's really, really hot, I tend to go and have a look at this vineyard, because it's got such a collection, and see which ones are performing the best, how the acid's looking."

Ratcliff already planted close to 40 different vines and is growing grapes for some astonishing wines, especially considering they come from a region long dismissed as a bulk wine source.

Recently, it was a nero d'Avola, made by Laura and Brendan Carter at Unico Zelo, cheekily and accurately named Fresh A.F, that had completely turned my head around—a lightning bolt of tart plum and cracked black pepper. I had never tasted a wine from the Riverland that was anything like it and I wanted to know who was growing it. An email to the Carters went unanswered, but, another door opened when Mark Davidson of Wine Australia provided some leads on growers invested in experimental varieties. He pointed me to Ashley Ratcliff, a Barossan viticulturist late of Yalumba, who earned his master's in marketing and started building his own estate in 2003. He was 34 years old at the time and couldn't afford land in Barossa, but he found 20 acres in the Riverland; now he has 200 acres there and manages another 100. Shiraz, cabernet, chardonnay—"the commodity stuff we grow"—still accounts for the lion's share, but he's become the go-to for alternate varieties since he started planting them in 2008. And, as it turns out, he grew the nero

d'Avola and zibibbo for that Unico Zelo wine.

Early on, Ratcliff bet big on vermentino, working with a large producer, only to watch it become a neutral white and to see prices crash. He has since built his business around artisanal producers, delivering small lots of carefully farmed fruit in refrigerated trucks to 40 different winemakers. And he can do it at higher yields in the Riverland than would be typical in McLaren Vale or Barossa. "This yield versus quality thing is a bit of a *furphy* sometimes," he says, using a local word he translates as "folktale sort of stuff, or bullshit."

He had a different kind of challenge with nero d'Avola. "The first year we grew it, we bunch-thinned it, shoot-thinned it. Threw everything at it and we thought we were doing right, and then we had a wet vintage that year and lost most of it to rot.

"We went back to the drawing board and said, How do we actually manage this variety?" His team decided to cut back on irrigation and fertilizer, and to stress the vines at flowering. "You want to get a lot of berry shatter," so he turns off the water that got the vine started for the season. Then, since the vines throw a lot of leaves into the bins when they are machine harvested, he hand-picks most of his nero.

Today, he says, "we just can't keep up. We just purchased another property this week, another 22 acres. With the whole aim of top-working it over to more alternative varieties." He plans for tastes to change, and for his vineyards to be ready: "Our whole approach will continue to evolve, to try to preempt what the next market's going to be." For now, his divide-and-conquer strategy might be helping to shape the trends rather than chasing them.

In addition to the southern Italian vines, he's had success with Portuguese varieties, including tinta amarella, tinta cão and

touriga nacional. "And I really like tinta barroca. To me it's almost like an inland pinot noir. We've only got 20 tons of it, so it's not massive amounts. We're getting some really funky winemakers that are taking that on, so that will help."

Though his friends in Barossa try to convince him to buy land there, business, for now, is booming at his parcels in the Riverland. And you won't find a wine in Barossa like his own Ricca Terra Nero d'Avola, or, really, anywhere else. Perhaps this sour plum and dried cherry beauty is an indication of the Riverland terroir...and what that land may produce in the years to come. ●



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CHESTER OSBORN, CARLA RZA AND RICHARD BETTS, ASHLEY RATCLIFF AND KATE GOODMAN

*"I really like tinta barroca. To me, it's almost like an inland pinot noir."*

— ASHLEY RATCLIFF, RICCA TERRA



# Year's Best South Australia Mediterranean Varieties

Our blind panels tasted **185** new-release South Australian shiraz, grenache and Mediterranean varieties over the past 12 months. **Joshua Greene**, our critic for Australian wines, rated **55** as exceptional (90+) and **25** as Best Buys. Find a complete list of wines tasted and all reviews at [wineandspiritsmagazine.com](http://wineandspiritsmagazine.com).

## BLENDS

### BAROSSA

**93 | Henschke** \$66  
**2017 Barossa Valley Johann's Garden**  
A blend from parcels of old, dry-farmed grenache on limestone, this includes mataro and a little syrah. If you love classic Barossa grenache, get some of this 2017, from a mild season with good reserves of water and a cool, late harvest that ended in the first week of May. You can sense that coolness in the quiet purity of fruit, the silken tannins and ample red-berry translucence of the wine. Stay with it, and the wine's simple first impression takes on a red-fruited grandeur. Still an incipient bud, this will bloom over the next ten years in bottle. *Winebow Imports, NY*

**91 | Henschke** \$72  
**2015 Barossa Keyneton Euphonium** The B-flat euphonium was part of the German brass ensemble in the Henschke Family Band as far back as 1888. Stephen and Prue Henschke maintain a collection of the original instruments, dedicating this wine to the family's musical history. It's a blend of shiraz (66 percent) with cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc grown in Eden and Barossa. The wine's deep raspberry-red fruit has scented layers of date, herb and pine. It's supple and complex, the sticky tannins the only aspect interfering with the wine's harmony, a factor that should resolve itself with bottle age. *Winebow Imports, NY*



**91 | Thorn-Clarke** \$28  
**2018 Barossa Valley Shotfire GSM (Best Buy)** The gamey scent of mataro stands

behind this wine's spicy red cherry flavors. The fruit is sweet, but that ripeness is edged with high-toned acidity that extends those cherry flavors in a salty, spicy finish. Pour it with spicy braised pork shoulder. *Kysela Père et Fils, Winchester, VA*

**90 | Penfolds** \$40  
**2018 Barossa Valley Bin 138 Shiraz Grenache Mataro** This is a powerful 2018, dense with dark berry flavors and tannins that recall the black skin of wild blueberries. Lasting, firm and lifted by some floral notes, this needs a few years in the cellar for the tannins to mellow. *Treasury Wine Estates, Napa, CA*

### CLARE VALLEY

**91 | Pikes** \$17  
**2018 Clare Valley Los Compañeros Shiraz Tempranillo (Best Buy)** Here's a steal: Plump tempranillo adds fruit to the spicy black-pepper notes of shiraz, giving this wine the feel of a ripe Rioja. There's a lovely umami gloss to the tannins, taking it to Logroño for a plate of wild mushrooms sautéed with garlic, or to Adelaide for seared tuna over a salad of avocado, arugula and orange slices. *Winebow Imports, NY*

### MCLAREN VALE



**93 | d'Arenberg** \$20  
**2017 McLaren Vale d'Arry's Original Grenache Shiraz (Best Buy)** "That's just beautiful." I don't often write those words for a \$20 wine, if I write them at all. While Chester Osborn may be farming 37 varieties and making many more wines, he has in no

way neglected this classic. In fact, this is the best d'Arry's Original in recent memory, though Chester's father, d'Arry Osborn, may remember better since he created the original "Burgundy" blend in the 1960s. This is a lovely, bright, sassy wine, more about elemental sensations than any direct fruit. The grape-skin freshness of its tannins seems to reflect the cool, late vintage, delivering a sensation like the pure brisk feel of snow melt. The texture is supple, with some rocky edges, and there's a spice to the wine, a bright fruit character shadowed by gamey notes. Simple, classic and delicious. *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*

**92 | S.C. Pannell** \$30  
**2017 South Australia Tempranillo/Touriga** More than half of this wine comes from a parcel in McLaren Vale (touriga nacional and tempranillo), the balance comes from a parcel in Barossa (tempranillo and tinta cão). The blend comes together in pure umami satisfaction, a hunter's wine that tastes salty, gamey and lush. Berkshire restaurateur Daniel Osman placed it "in a castle hall, with a board full of meats, juices dribbling down your thick beard." *Vine Street Imports, Mount Laurel, NJ*

**90 | d'Arenberg** \$29  
**2017 McLaren Vale The Sticks & Stones Tempranillo-Grenache-Souzao** There's density to this blend of Iberian varieties, with the waxiness of wild blueberry skins and the fruitiness of boletes. It's balanced between bright acidity and cedary tannins, ready for a mushroom risotto. *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*

### GRACIANO

**92 | Paxton** \$30  
**2019 McLaren Vale Graciano** David Paxton grafted some chardonnay vines over to graciano at his biodynamically farmed estate. Planted on alluvial soils with clay and riverstones, that parcel ripened its fruit to a candied cherry and salted licorice flavor in 2019. That bright fruit lasts along with briny tannins that shape it and lend clarity to the



flavors. Only a few sites in its native Rioja grow a ripe and complete graciano; here's a vineyard on the other side of the world that can. *Cabernet Corp., Novato, CA*

## GRENAICHE

### BAROSSA

#### 96 | An Approach to Relaxation \$58

**2017 Barossa Valley Sucette Grenache** The cool, late-ripening 2017 season played right into the hands of Carla Rzeszewski and Richard Betts, the sommelier power-couple behind An Approach to Relaxation. That was the year they purchased a 12-acre parcel of dry-farmed grenache vines, mostly planted between 1860 and 1880, growing in the deep sands of Vine Vale. The vines had contributed fruit to Sucette's 2016 vintage, and provided more than half of the 2017 (by 2019, Sucette was entirely from that estate parcel). They make the wine half a mile away, fermenting it with some whole clusters in open-top vats, then aging it in old French oak barrels. Open the bottle and pour a glass: You'll get a blast of peppery grenache, the bright sunlight stored in the fruit immediately released. It might be worth the price of admission if the wine went south then and there, but that sunny energy and the sand-driven tannins only gain dynamism with air; the delicate strawberry, the darker black raspberry depths, the lavender fragrance and unreal length of flavor make the wine compellingly drinkable for days. A Barossa classic reimagined (think Robert O'Callaghan's great Dry-Grown Grenache vintages at Rockford Basket Press), this is a wine that has held fast in my memory for weeks after tasting it. The only downside in buying a case is the separation anxiety you are likely to feel on opening the last bottle, and the cravings that may come after finishing it. *Broadbent Selections, Richmond, VA*

#### 94 | Geyer \$35

**2018 Barossa Sands Grenache** Dave Geyer makes this dynamic grenache from 85-year-old vines growing in the sands of Vine Vale. He destems half the bunches, then takes the fruit through fermentation, basket pressing and aging the wine in neutral oak before bottling, managing the process without any additions. There is no sulfur added to this wine and nothing holding back its energy, glinting in facets of light, its mineral power delivered through peach-red fruit, scents of orange blossoms and a deep well of tannins. This is remarkably fresh and resistant

to oxygen, an elegant grenache with the distinctive profile of the grape grown in Barossa's sands. Don't miss it. *Vine Street Imports, Mount Laurel, NJ*



#### 94 | Schild Estate \$30

**2017 Barossa Valley Edgar Schild Reserve Old Bush Vine Grenache** Barossa's old bush-vine grenache responded beautifully to the cool, late season in 2017. If you want proof, look no further than this elegant raspberry- and strawberry-scented red. Its tannins carry the gentle sandy texture and the subtle tarry highlights of classic Barossa grenache, grounding the tart fruit, seeming to transform it into flowers. The flavors and scents and textures of the wine keep giving more pleasure with each sip. *USA Wine West, Sausalito, CA*

#### 92 | Powell & Son \$250

**2017 Barossa Valley Brennecke Grenache** Dave and Callum Powell make this wine from a vineyard in Seppeltsfield, where the dry-grown bush vines were planted in 1901. Maybe I have always coveted the black GT Falcon V8 Interceptor, the car that Mad Max drove as long as he could keep it together. This wine immediately brought to mind the fierce speed of that car as it raced through the Australian Outback. Its sweet fruit is superripe but not overripe, that sweetness invested in the scent of road tar, which may be the Interceptor connection. Whatever it is, this wine makes me smile. *Powell & Son USA, Carlsbad, CA*

## MCLAREN VALE

#### 94 | Paxton \$30

**2019 McLaren Vale Grenache** This grows at Paxton's Landcross Farm, surrounding the family's winery in Seaview, and at their Thomas Block. The vines are farmed under biodynamics, certified since 2011. And the wine shows that care in farming through its generous red-currant fruit intensity, along with the sort of mineral austerity that will convince fans of Rhône to consider Aussie grenache. It's packed with tension,

continuing to grow more delicious as that youthful structure opens toward richness. *Cabernet Corp., Novato, CA*

#### 93 | Oliver's Taranga \$35

**2019 McLaren Vale Grenache** Corrina Wright is the sixth-generation of her family to tend vines at the property William Oliver first planted in Seaview in the 1840s. The vines that produced this grenache date to 1965, planted in shallow red-brown loam over limestone. At first, this has the richness of garnacha from Rioja, the tannins dense with a beeswax character, calling for roast eggplant stuffed with lamb. Later, with a few hours of air, the fruit comes out—transparent earthy red berries—and the tannins have turned brisk, showing the underlying limestone edifice of the wine's structure. A graceful grenache. *Epicurean Wines, Seattle, WA*

#### 93 | Thistledown \$45

**2019 Blewitt Springs The Vagabond Old Vine Grenache** This grows at several parcels in Blewitt Springs, all dry farmed bush vines, all planted on sand over ironstone. This wine fermented spontaneously in two portions: Two thirds of it was left alone in concrete, in layers of whole bunches and crushed fruit. The rest was hand plunged in an open-top fermenter. Whatever that might bring to the wine, it's pretty delicious, the Blewitt Springs sands delivering a beautifully fresh grenache in layers of red fruit—currant, strawberry, cranberry and red-apple skin. The airy, super mineral tannins bring some dark green-olive tones. *Southern Starz, Huntington Beach, CA*

#### 93 | Thistledown \$75

**2019 Clarendon This Charming Man Single Vineyard Grenache** From a parcel of dry-farmed bush vines trained high to let in air and sun, this grenache fermented with ambient yeasts and some whole clusters (20 percent). It's light and fragrant in its apple-blossom scents, then powerful in the iron-filing rip of the tannins. The pretty red fruit makes it graceful despite its weight, in a linebacker sort of way. Firm, juicy and built to last. *Southern Starz, Huntington Beach, CA*

#### 92 | d'Arenberg \$29

**2018 McLaren Vale The Derelict Vineyard Grenache** The ancient vines that deliver this grenache were once abandoned and about to be pulled out after fortified wines lost favor and white varieties took off. Chester Osborn used that moment to buy up these parcels, adding them to his family's estate. They now produce grenache that cascades with fruit

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in 2018, floral and sunny wild strawberry flavors and sweet lavender perfume. Tannins hold it tight, so the wine feels refined and juicy at once. This should develop well in the cellar. *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*

**91 | Ess & See** \$28  
**2018 McLaren Vale No. 5 Grenache** Ripeness takes this grenache toward sweet flavors of baked strawberries and red plums. It's full and round, with a lovely ease to its generous baked-clay tannins. Pour it with salmon roasted in a salt crust. *Biagio Cru and Estate Wines, New Hyde Park, NY*

**91 | Thistledown** \$45  
**2019 McLaren Vale She's Electric Old Vine Single Vineyard Grenache** From a vineyard in Seaview, this dry-farmed, old-bush-vine grenache shows the region's warmth in its baked-strawberry flavors and lasting ground black-pepper spice. It's bright in the middle, gentle in the end with a red fruit glow. Pour it with spicy grilled pork. *Southern Starz, Huntington Beach, CA*

**90 | Nick Haselgrove** \$25  
**2016 McLaren Vale Blackbilly Old Vine Grenache** Lean in its structure and concentrated in its meaty tannins, this wine shows the warmth of McLaren Vale in its baked fruit flavors. Give this some time in a decanter while you grill fennel sausages for dinner. *EcoValley, Salisbury, NC*

**90 | Poppelvej** \$39  
**2019 McLaren Vale Rookie Grenache** A thoroughly natural McLaren grenache, this brings sour-apple acidity and toasted hazelnut savor to its warm, gamey flavors. It reminded one taster of grouse, and it would work well with any dark-meat game bird. (Winemaker Uffe Deichmann grew up in Denmark on a street called "Poplar Way," a clue to how you might try to say the wine's name.) *Vine Street Imports, Mount Laurel, NJ*

### MENCIA

**90 | d'Arenberg** \$29  
**2019 McLaren Vale The Anthropocene Epoch Mencía** Chester Osborn grafted some merlot over to mencía eight years ago, and has since grafted more. It ripens five weeks later than shiraz, Osborn says, making similarly aromatic wines without going jammy. His 2019 is texturally complete, a rustic wine with ripe cherry flavors and bitter, gamey tannins that have a fruity-mushroom scent. Dark and woody, it will take on roast goat. *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*

### MOURVEDRE

**93 | Thorn-Clarke** \$32  
**2018 Barossa Valley Hoffman DV Ebenezer Road Single Vineyard Mataro** Peter Kelly makes this wine from a parcel in northern Barossa along Ebenezer Road, where the vines grown in sandy loam soils. This is a vibrant red with concentrated fresh boysenberry fruit and equally fresh tannins, mataro in all its primitive glory. The tannins bring dark notes of salty black beans and cumin spice, while the fruit cuts through with a prickle of acidity. It's a spicy, untamed red with a long horizon line of flavor. *Kysela Père et Fils, Winchester, VA*

### NERO D'AVOLA



**92 | Unico Zelo** \$20  
**2020 Riverland Fresh A.F. Nero d'Avola (Best Buy)** Laura and Brendan Carter produce a range of nero d'Avola wines, working with fruit from Clare Valley, from the Adelaide Hills and from Barmera in Riverland. We only tasted the Fresh AF, the lightest of their neros, blended with old-vine zibibbo that grows along with it in Riverland—that kick of zibibbo makes it, as one taster said, “a white-wine lover’s red wine.” Well, it’s a wine for this red-wine lover, too, as I couldn’t resist the tart plum and cracked black pepper scents that poured out of this glass, surprisingly bold given the wine’s light lavender color. Given its red-fruit length, this may be one of the best Riverland wines I’ve tasted. Built to drink now, especially if you’re serving Sicilian snacks, like fried-potato *crocchè*, *pannele* (chickpea fritters) or *pizza secca*. *Epicurean Wines, Seattle, WA*

**90 | Ricca Terra** \$25  
**2018 Riverland Nero d'Avola** Ashley Ratcliff started growing Mediterranean varieties in the Riverland in 2008, selling the fruit to small wineries—like Unico Zelo, for their nero-zibibbo blend. This is his own take on nero d'Avola, seemingly simple at first, with an earthy, licorice-like sweetness and cherry-liqueur flavors. But there’s a subtle change to the wine in the glass, a shift

toward dried-cherry character that gives it an Italianate feel. Both full and lithe, this is destined for a wood-oven pizza. *Vine Street Imports, Mount Laurel, NJ*

### SHIRAZ



**95 | Penfolds** \$800  
**2016 South Australia Grange Bin 95** Under Peter Gago's direction, Grange has become a thoroughly contemporary wine, building on more than 60 years of history, standing apart from the wars over the soul of shiraz while playing a leadership role in negotiations for a truce. This 2016 presents all of shiraz's power and energy as textural bliss, bypassing simple fruit, high alcohol or tannic interruptions. The damson plum, huckleberry and dark currant flavors are layered into the wine's complexity, but the impression isn't about fruit. The sweet oak spice, the savory chocolate ganache and the meaty, musky scents in the tannins show no heat of the alcohol that extracted them. If you do perceive the alcohol, it reads as the varied wavelengths of light from distant planets, a cool energy that drives the wine and will sustain it, like other great vintages of Grange, for fifty years or more. *Treasury Wine Estates, Napa, CA*



**94 | Penfolds** \$150  
**2017 South Australia St. Henri Shiraz** By aging some of his top shiraz in large, old wooden vats, Peter Gago follows a tradition established by John Davoren in the 1950s, creating one of the most elegant and long-lived red wines of Australia. The cool, late 2017 vintage played into the St. Henri



style, producing a clean, fragrant wine with scents of roses and fresh strawberries, the flavors bound in a tension between racy and generous, luscious and restrained. Berkshire chef Amy Loveless described it as “an inviting wine. There’s nothing high-octane about it. The fruit is calm.” Which is another way of describing how different the style is from the powerful, sometimes explosive force of Penfolds’ Grange. St. Henri ignores all the recent tangents of Aussie shiraz: It’s not big, it’s not lean, it’s neither sweet nor severe. There’s something copacetic about it; the wine doesn’t call attention to itself, and yet it is a delicious shiraz structured to age for decades. *Treasury Wine Estates, Napa, CA*



**92 | Penfolds** \$40  
**2018 South Australia Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz** Bin 28 is focused on warm-climate shiraz, including Barossa fruit—the wine was originally named for the Kalimna Vineyard in Barossa, though the blend ranges more broadly now. There’s warmth in the boldness of the red-fruit flavors, making them open and yielding, but the wine isn’t thick. It’s an earthy shiraz with the grace and elegance of a well-blended Penfolds wine. *Treasury Wine Estates, Napa, CA*

**90 | Small Gully** \$19  
**2017 South Australia The Formula Robert’s Shiraz** This wine delivers the luscious generosity you might expect from shiraz in South Australia, and the kind of unkempt tannins of a slightly off-kilter Aussie. This is bold and full without feeling heavy, a gracious shiraz for roast duck. *Vine Street Imports, Mount Laurel, NJ*

**88 | Paringa** \$12  
**2019 South Australia Shiraz (Best Buy)** Order a case of this bright and spicy shiraz and you’ll get a brash young red with clean cherry flavors, light tannins and a hint of road tar on a summer’s day at the beach. *Quintessential, Napa, CA*

**87 | Shoofly** \$14  
**2017 South Australia Shiraz (Best Buy)** Tart grape flavors fill out this tarry shiraz, a big wine with some charm to keep you coming back for more. Especially if you’re grilling burgers. *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*

## ADELAIDE HILLS

**93 | Shaw + Smith** \$38  
**2016 Adelaide Hills Shiraz** Think intense and fragrant black-fruited pinot and you’ll be close to the vinous character of this shiraz. Shaw + Smith is the collaboration started in 1989 between cousins Michael Hill Smith, MW and Martin Shaw, now including 136 acres of vines in the cool reaches of the Adelaide Hills. Shaw combines whole berries and whole bunches in his open-top fermenters, aging the wine in French oak barrels, one-third new. The concentration of the fruit stands up to that oak, so you feel the power instead in the sensation of grape-skin tannins, firm, juicy and fragrant themselves. If you tend to prefer Old World wines, consider this New World red for its elegance. And if you love great Aussie shiraz, don’t miss it. *Winebow Imports, NY*



**92 | Sidewood** \$25  
**2018 Adelaide Hills Shiraz (Best Buy)** This estate-grown shiraz ferments spontaneously with some whole bunches and whole berries, then it spends 18 months in French oak barrels, some 300-liter, some 500-liter, one-quarter of them new. The wine starts from a tight place, showing its intensity through scents of jasmine and peppercorn. Those aromas seem to lift out of the tannins while the fruit shows dark richness and pungency. Give this a year or two in the cellar to fully develop. *Epicurean Wines, Seattle, WA*

**90 | Vintage Longbottom** \$50  
**2017 Adelaide Hills Henry’s Drive Shiraz** This is a big shiraz with substantial power for the Adelaide Hills; it shows some alcohol around the edges of its otherwise smooth, plummy flavors. The warmth points up the wine’s peppercorn spice, lends some buzz to

its vibrant fruit and takes the tannins in a slightly bitter direction. Tight and spicy. For grilled lamb. *Quintessential, Napa, CA*

## BAROSSA

**95 | Powell & Son** \$600  
**2017 Barossa Eden Flaxman’s Valley Steinert Shiraz** This is Dave Powell’s second act, after building a reputation for larger-than-life Barossa shiraz at Torbreck, a company he founded in the 1990s by share-farming old vines for families who might otherwise have pulled them out. He moved on in 2014, starting this project with his son Callum, whose formal training at the University of Adelaide and less formal work for a vintage with Jean-Louis Chave in the Rhône brings a fresh perspective to their wines. The Steinert family’s vineyard in Eden Valley sustains five acres of 120-year-old shiraz vines, which the Powells harvest in three picks, ferment in open-top cement vats, and then age in new French oak barriques. The altitude of the site (1,575 feet) and its northeastern exposure promote freshness, translated here as a mountain blueberry character in the fruit as well as red-cherry persistence. The tannins are summery and bright, with a red spice that combines with a vibrant buzz of acidity. This is serious, grand-cru level wine, elegant, rich and distinctly Barossa—the cooler, higher altitude, Eden side of Barossa. *Powell & Son USA, Carlsbad, CA*

**95 | Powell & Son** \$115  
**2017 Barossa Valley Schulz Shiraz** This grows at a vineyard in the northwestern corner of Barossa, farmed by Marcus Schulz, the first grower to sell old-vine fruit to Powell at Torbreck in 1994. It’s the only source of a single-vineyard wine from the Powells where they do not manage the viticulture. The wine is immediately about texture, the gentle persistence of the tannins, their refinement and their smoky grandeur. Meanwhile, the fruit takes some time to settle in, moving away from an initial touch of alcohol and stewed character toward a clarity it shares with the tannins, the two combining in a cherry-pit flavor while the volatile esters of the fruit highlight that depth with a pure, translucent red berry overtone that lasts. *Powell & Son USA, Carlsbad, CA*

**94 | Massena** \$50  
**2016 Barossa Valley The Eleventh Hour Shiraz** Massena is a collective of Barossa winemakers working with old-vine sites, making their wine traditionally: fermenting their reds in open-top vats without added

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yeasts, using basket presses and seasoned French oak and bottling without fining or filtering. Jaysen Collins makes this wine from two parcels, including one in Greenock where some of the 60-year-old vines were saved from being bulldozed at the last minute. The wine's delicate floral scents include rose and buttercup, its spicy dark fruit sweet without sugar sweetness. An explosion of shiraz deliciousness in the middle of the wine ends on a trail of smoky refinement. This will age, but it's pretty great to drink right now, especially with a slow-braised spicy pork shoulder. *Epicurean Wines, Seattle, WA*

### 93 | Seppeltsfield \$22

**2018 Barossa Shiraz (Best Buy)** Working with the open-top fermenters at this gravity-flow winery built in 1888, Fiona Donald focuses this shiraz on estate vineyards on the western ridge of Barossa. It's sunny and fresh, with nothing to get in the way of its silken texture, wild strawberry flavors and savory, warm, tar-scented tannins. Classic Barossa shiraz with crisp, mineral length of fruit flavor, this is ready to drink with grilled lamb. *Legend, Los Angeles, CA*

### 93 | Yalumba \$135

**2016 Barossa Valley The Octavius Old Vine Shiraz** This is blended from vineyard parcels with an average age of 100 years, then aged in octaves—100-liter barrels coopered from French oak at Yalumba. That small format oak gives the concentrated fruit an immediate richness, a fat wine bursting with cherry ripeness and the umami-tinged bitterness of flower petals. Stay with it and the cherry fruit turns plump and elegant, the wine's richness shaped by fine tannins. This should age with grace. *Winebow Imports, NY*

### 92 | Bethany \$30

**2018 Barossa Valley Bethany Creek Shiraz** This wine's voluptuous dark fruit feels clean, highlighted by cranberry and orange blossom notes. It fills the mouth with joy, and then leaves a gentle impression of tannins, the finish edged in iron-like tension. For now, the wine only goes so far, then pulls back, a reticence that may resolve with a year of bottle age, or in the presence of pork rillettes. *Liquid Innovation, Chatham, NJ*

### 92 | Thorn-Clarke \$25

**2018 Barossa James Goddard Shiraz (Best Buy)** Blended from two estate vineyards, St. Kitts and Milton Park, this shiraz offers its richness without any aggression or overt perfume. It's just lush and delicious, a friendly embrace of firm tannins and purple-

red fruit. The texture and flavor combine in a saturated meatiness, for Korean barbecue. *Kysela Père et Fils, Winchester, VA*

### 91 | Elderton \$105

**2016 Barossa Command Shiraz** Vibrant red currant flavors live under this wine's hard edge of reduction. There's also a generous texture trying to push past that tension, the texture cacao-rich without any thickness. This is a floral, gamey shiraz waiting to escape from its blunt shackles. For the cellar. *Broadbent Selections, Richmond, VA*

### 91 | Lambert Estate \$75

**2017 Barossa Valley The Family Tree Shiraz** A rich and velvety shiraz, this wine handles its luxurious ripeness with grace, offering juicy flavors of figs and raisins with nothing dried out or volatile. The texture leaves a supple impression of the tannins giving fruit flavor in the end. A ripe wine with gentle depths. *AUSA Pacific, Las Vegas, NV*

### 91 | Two Hands \$33

**2019 Barossa Valley Angels Share Shiraz** Saturated with blue-black fruit, this wine is clean and fragrant with a subtle grip to its sandy tannins. It leaves a gentle impression of sweet cherries, a generous shiraz balanced to drink on its own or with meats off the grill. *Terlato Wines Int'l, Lake Bluff, IL*

### 90 | Two Hands \$33

**2019 Barossa Valley Gnarly Dudes Shiraz** This rustic Barossa shiraz contrasts the fruit sweetness of violet candies with the saltiness of earthy tannins. The two aspects come together with a lot of umami notes—salty anchovies and fruity mushrooms. Tart acidity keeps it clean. For grilled bratwurst. *Terlato Wines Int'l, Lake Bluff, IL*

### 89 | Yalumba \$21

**2018 Barossa Valley Samuel's Collection Shiraz (Best Buy)** A lean and smoky shiraz with warm spice, this combines sweet strawberry flavors with supple, putty-like tannins. *Winebow Imports, NY*

### 88 | Dandelion \$22

**2018 Barossa Valley Lionheart of the Barossa Shiraz (Best Buy)** With a wallop of purple fruit, this thick-fisted shiraz delivers flavors of stewed plums and oak in a full-on, viscous texture. Pour it with pork barbecue. *Vine Street Imports, Mount Laurel, NJ*

### 88 | First Drop \$20

**2018 Barossa Mother's Milk Shiraz (Best Buy)** Ripe and perfumed, this wine keeps its

stewed plum flavors tense, the density of the fruit restrained by iron-like tannins. There's a gamey note to those tannins, placing the wine with a braise. *firstdropwines.com*

### 88 | St. Hallett \$18

**2018 Barossa Faith Shiraz (Best Buy)** Heady and sweet in its floral complexity, this is a soft shiraz with enough crispness to the structure to add some tension. It's clean and pleasing, especially with braised beef. *Quintessential, Napa, CA*

## CLARE VALLEY

### 92 | Jim Barry \$20

**2017 Clare Valley Lodge Hill Shiraz (Best Buy)** Peter Barry makes this wine with fruit from his family's Lodge Hill Vineyard, in the hills three miles east of the township of Clare. It's a shiraz with vibrant flavors of red and black raspberries, showing off the cool side of Clare in 2017. Fresh and bright, opening to graceful intensity, this is ready to take on crisp-edged grilled pork. *Loosen Bros USA, Oregon City, OR*

## EDEN VALLEY

### 93 | Henschke \$225

**2015 Eden Valley Mount Edelstone Shiraz** The Mount Edelstone vineyard was planted in 1912 by Ronald Fife, a descendant of George Angus Fife, a founder of South Australia. Cyril Henschke made the family's first wine from the property as a single-vineyard shiraz in 1952. The vines, now tended by Stephen and Prue Henschke, are dry farmed on their own roots in deep red-brown clay-loam and clay. Those shiraz vines, now more than 100 years old, provided an earthy 2015 with a balsamic note to its ripe perfume of raspberries and cherries, lasting on bittersweet cherry-pit tannins. The fruit is youthfully pungent, with the kind of purity—or lack of excess—that bodes well for a long arc of development in the cellar. *Winebow Imports, NY*

## LANGHORNE CREEK

### 90 | Wild & Wilder \$18

**2019 Langhorne Creek The Opportunist Shiraz (Best Buy)** From the folks at Thistledown, this is shiraz grown on the red brown sandy loams of Langhorne Creek, the vines rooted into a base of clay with quartz and limestone. They deliver a light and delicately perfumed shiraz with sour cherry notes and green-peppercorn spice. You might imagine the limestone acidity buzzing with



energy in the end. Pretty great for \$18. *Southern Starz, Huntington Beach, CA*

## LIMESTONE COAST

**93 | Terre à Terre** \$30  
**2015 Wrattontully Crayères Vineyard Shiraz** This project began when Christian Bizot ventured from Champagne to the Adelaide Hills, where he planted vines in the Piccadilly Valley with the help of Brian Croser. Bizot's son, Xavier, and Croser's daughter, Lucy, are now partners, having married in 2003 and purchased land in Wrattontully the following year. Their parcel is on a limestone ridge over terra rossa soils, with limestone caves below. Its 2.5 acres of shiraz, planted in 2008, provided the fruit for this fascinating wine, its flavor details ranging from citrus blossoms to red mulberries and gingery tannins with the power and supple grace derived from these limestone soils. Check it out. *Solstars, New York, NY*

**90 | Penfolds** \$40  
**2018 Coonawarra Bin 128 Shiraz** Knowing this wine's provenance, I'd guess it will prove itself with time. And, at first glance, it's already there, a layered, substantial shiraz, saturated with ripe cherry flavor. There's a touch of sweetness to perk up the wine's delicious fruit. Then the tannins, which feel refined at first, begin to show some edges. It feels like youthful reduction getting in the way, and there's plenty of concentration here to sustain the wine for years as it matures. *Treasury Wine Estates, Napa, CA*

**88 | Jip Jip Rocks** \$20  
**2018 Padthaway Shiraz (Best Buy)** There's refinement to this wine's fresh strawberry flavors, clean in the middle, with darker, sweet cherry fruit in the end. This is simple and pleasing, a shiraz for roast root vegetables this winter. *Kysela Père et Fils, Winchester, VA*

**88 | Penley Estate** \$20  
**2018 Coonawarra Atlas Shiraz (Best Buy)** This shiraz strikes a serious tone with its sour cherry flavors and refined, musky tannins—it brings to mind the savor of grass-fed beef. It's juicy and satisfying, for a beef stew. *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*

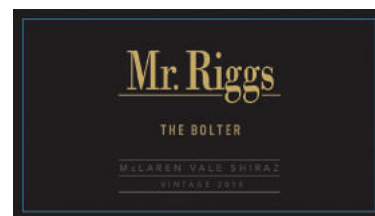
## MCLAREN VALE



**94 | d'Arenberg** \$65  
**2017 McLaren Vale The Dead Arm Shiraz** Only Chester Osborn would name his icon wine after a disease, in this case, *eutypa dieback*, caused by a wood fungus that eventually kills off a cane on an old vine, leaving a dead arm that needs to be cut away. His collection of old-vine shiraz parcels include a lot of vines with dead arms, which then concentrate their efforts on the fruit they grow on the arms that remain. This 2017 shows that concentration in a stately, plump wine, radiating sun from its blue-black fruit and contrasting earthiness in its rooty, radish-like tannins. Supple and elegant, this has the stature to age with grace. *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*

**93 | d'Arenberg** \$29  
**2017 McLaren Vale The Wild Pixie Shiraz** The d'Arenberg team co-ferments shiraz with roussanne for this blend, taking it through foot treading, basket pressing and then aging in old French-oak barrels. The roussanne perks up the scent of this wine with hothouse flowers and skunky marijuana notes, all of that briskly wrapped into the plump stone fruit flavors of peaches and plums. It's the generosity that clearly shines through, the funk providing complexity to the wine's depths of fruit. *Old Bridge Cellars, Napa, CA*

**92 | Davey Family** \$50  
**2016 McLaren Vale D Block Reserve Shiraz** Rich and spicy in its vibrant purple plum fruit, this wine shows some superripeness in scents of peach and fruit leather notes. Bitter chocolate tannins hold that ripeness in check, their texture feeling elastic, gentle acidity bringing tension to the wine. It's a big wine for roast beef or roast fresh ham. *Precept Wine, Seattle, WA*



**91 | Mr. Riggs** \$20  
**2018 McLaren Vale The Bolter Shiraz (Best Buy)** Ben Riggs blends this wine from a wide range of parcels throughout McLaren Vale, producing a wine that combines bright cherry richness with tangy orange oil notes in a clean, refreshing shiraz. *Epicurean Wines, Seattle, WA*



**91 | Spring Seed** \$20  
**2017 McLaren Vale Scarlett Runner Shiraz (Best Buy)** Joch Bosworth started converting his family's vineyards to organic farming in 1995, now using that fruit for this label and for Battle of Bosworth. His 2017 feels cool and brisk against its jammy black-currant flavors. There's a grassy note to the dusty tannins, suited to roast game. *Epicurean Wines, Seattle, WA*

**90 | Mitolo** \$30  
**2018 McLaren Vale Angela Shiraz** From a vineyard near Willunga in the south of McLaren Vale, this wine focuses on black raspberry flavors and some sanguine, iron-rich notes of game. The bright berry flavor is what lasts, tense and floral. *Vintus, NY*

**89 | Davey Family** \$20  
**2017 McLaren Vale Shiraz (Best Buy)** Warm and generous, this wine's fruit has a peachy ripeness. That broad intensity and high-toned richness will take on a fatty grilled steak. *Precept Wine, Seattle, WA*