



## The Key Review of Wines (KROW) Issue 11

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***Enjoy reading this Shiraz selection, we certainly enjoyed reviewing the wines.***

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**TK**

**In this issue:**

**[Shiraz, Shiraz Viognier and Shiraz plus something else](#)**

**[The Victorian selection](#)**

**[The WA Trio](#)**

**[Shiraz and allsorts \(SAL\)](#)**

**Shiraz, Shiraz Viognier and Shiraz plus something else...**

As I have written many times before, Australia has a vast range of Shiraz and Shiraz blends. The first reviews are those labeled as Shiraz although they may include other varieties. Under the 80/20 rule, most are likely to be straight Shiraz. Then there are those that make a point of proclaiming the Viognier content. The good Australian staples Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon are included with other Shiraz blends.

For want of a better description the first trio is basic Australian Shiraz with little made of their origin:

**Zilzie Shiraz 2006:** Rich ripe fruit nose with a hint of tea. In the mouth it's like the universe starts with a bang and just keeps expanding. It will please many as it's a simple drop.

A\$15 | [www.zilziewines.com](http://www.zilziewines.com)

**Woop Woop Shiraz 2006:** Cream toffee nose; crude or rustic style of Shiraz. like the Zilzie big burst of flavour but little else.

A\$13 | [www.woopwoop.com.au](http://www.woopwoop.com.au)

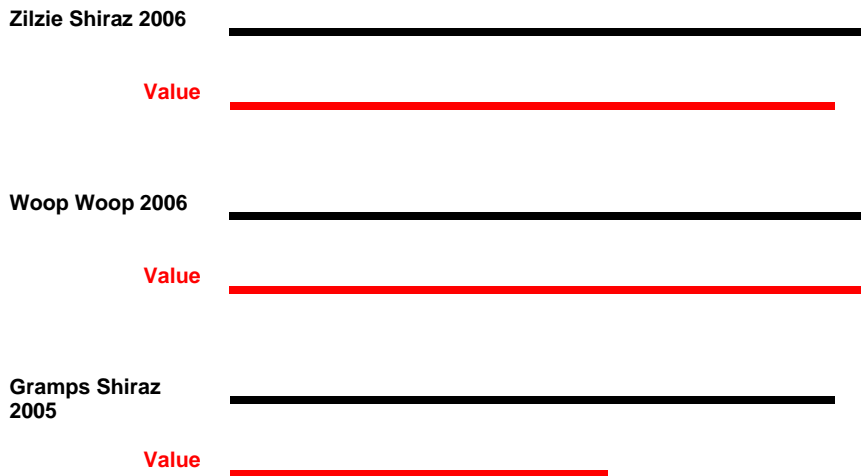
**Gramps Shiraz 2005:** The accompanying blurb says this wine scored a gold medal at the 2007 Rutherglen Wine Show. Sure it was the wine show and not the log chopping contest? Overabundance of sweet American oak.

The above represent simple red wines that carry the name Shiraz and are made in Australia. The thing about them is that they could be made in any New World Country – they are typical commercial wines. They do little for the wine reputation of Australia but they come in at certain price points. Although in my book they don't really represent value for money (see chart), they are the sort of wines that might be found on special/discount, making them better value.

The charts show how I rate one wine against the other (black line); the red line gives its relative value. In my opinion the further the red line exceeds past the black line, the better value that wine is.

When the red line is shorter than the black line it doesn't always indicate poor value and the notes should explain that in greater detail. All wine is judged as if I was drinking it at the time therefore if it is hard and unapproachable due to youth, it's not good value for the consumer to buy and drink that night. That is not to say it isn't worth buying and putting away for a time.

When I say works better with food it's because I have tasted it on the bench and then with food as certain wines often taste better in this context. What food? Doesn't matter - that's up to you and I find it both a waste of time to just give guidance (pork chop, tuna) and a touch precious on the writer's part. Also, I really don't care what tucker you like, what I do know is a decent plate of food, enjoyable glass of wine and good company is enough.



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**Shingleback 'Red Knot' McLaren Vale Shiraz 2006:** Unlike the wines above, Red knot has a regional home (McLaren Vale) which translates to expectations of what's in the bottle before the wine is opened. It also comes from a respected McLaren Vale producer, more

expectations. It is a couple of notches above the others and at a good price.

A\$15 [www.shingleback.com.au](http://www.shingleback.com.au)

**Nugan Estate 'Parish Vineyard' McLaren Vale Shiraz 2005:** Dark ripe fruits (plum/blackberry) underscored with the smell of earth on the nose. Battling past the oak (14 months in American) it has some wonderful flavours that slowly release as the wine travels. If, and only if (I have doubts) the oak subsides, this has great potential.

A\$23 [www.nuganestate.com.au](http://www.nuganestate.com.au)

**Wirra Wirra 'Woodhenge' McLaren Vale Shiraz 2006:** Ripe nose with white pepper overtones, soft on entry then starts to build, flavours unfolding on one level, well supported underneath with acid/tannin. Good depth and length with a great aftertaste and a long, long finish.

A\$35 [www.wirra.com.au](http://www.wirra.com.au)

**D'Arenberg 'The Dead Arm' McLaren Vale Shiraz 2005:** The nose is like catching a very faint whiff of tar from a distance, but try and get closer and it's gone. Also earth and hint of savory...it's intriguing. It's a full on McLaren Vale Shiraz - comes in chunks rather than a sip; extremely generous in all departments. It's also a little wayward at the moment but will settle.

A\$65 [www.darenberg.com.au](http://www.darenberg.com.au)

**Mr Riggs 'The Gaffer' McLaren Vale Shiraz 2006:** A well rounded wine in all aspects; smooth, perhaps too smooth, lacking grip – it's all upfront, lacking substance. I remain unsure about this wine.

A\$22 [www.mrriggs.com.au](http://www.mrriggs.com.au)

Fascinating range of Shiraz from McLaren Vale: one region, so many different styles. Great fun to taste and discuss but more so to drink.

Shingleback  
06 'Red Knot'  
McLaren Vale  
Value



Nugan Estate  
'Parish  
Vineyard'  
2005  
Value



Wirra Wirra  
2006  
'Woodhenge'  
Value



D'Arenberg  
;The Dead  
Arm' Shiraz  
05

Value

Mr Riggs 'The  
Gaffer' Shiraz  
2006

Value

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**Cimicky 'Trumps' Barossa Valley Shiraz 2006:** Oh my, what a cracker! You really don't need all the wine waffle – it's good; it's very, very good.

A\$19 | N/A

**Grant Burge 'Filsell' Barossa Valley Shiraz 2005:** From the notes: 'ripe raspberry, Belgian chocolate, rich fruit cake, spices and vanillin oak nuances'. Oh well, if it keeps them happy and somebody in a job. That aside it's a quality wine - starts with a blast but settles in the centre multi-layered showing many aspects of flavour; good mouth feel and plenty of length.

A\$29 | [www.grantburgewines.com.au](http://www.grantburgewines.com.au)

The two Barossa Shirazes performed very well but it would be unfair to compare them to McLaren Vale and say the Barossa was a better region for Shiraz - the sample amount from each would have to be much greater before that statement could be made.

Cimicky  
'Trumps'  
Barossa  
Shiraz 2006

Value

Grant Burge  
'Filsell'  
Barossa  
Shiraz 2005

Value

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**Bridgewater Mill Adelaide Hills Shiraz 2005:** Although labeled as Shiraz, the notes say there is a Viognier 'influence.' It's a wine that slowly unfolds, has some depth, good length and a fine finish. Strangely enough it didn't transfer well to the table - maybe the food was unsuitable - but it was fine to sit, watch the TV and drink.

A\$25 | [www.bridgewatermill.com.au](http://www.bridgewatermill.com.au)

**Bimbadgen 'Signature' Hunter Valley Shiraz 2006:** Has the damp earthy Hunter nose but not full on; very slow to start but picks up pace as it travels. In the middle of the palate the flavours not only continue to unfurl but they also take on depth and the texture of the wine starts to show itself. Only held back on higher marks by its youth, needs a few years yet.

A\$50 | [www.bimbadgen.com.au](http://www.bimbadgen.com.au)

**Bridgewater Mill  
Ade Hills Shiraz  
2005**

Value

**Bimbadgen 2006  
'Signature' Hunter  
V.**

Value

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### The Victorian selection

**Kulkurt 'Volcanic' Grampians Shiraz 2005:** Sheep and crops are the main occupation of this property with the lady of the house also a school teacher. Behind the house, on the slopes of a long extinct volcano is a small patch of vines. The owners don't make the wine and don't even market the wine. In fact I'm not sure they know what to do with it! However a family member gave me a bottle to try and I was very impressed; Gentle nose with pepper/spice coming through, concentrated ripe fruit flavor hit the palate first, unfolding on the journey. Weight is good as is texture; depth only comes towards the end but it's worth noting. I've put a retail price of \$25 on the wine as a judgment point.

A\$25 | N/A

**Giant Steps 'Miller Vineyard' Yarra Valley Shiraz 2006:** In the notes the maker reckons he can see the contents of a market fruit stall, supermarket veggie section and the herbs and spices of the world. Bugged if I could see any of that, but it was fun trying. For me the nose was light on as was the entry. It was only when the wine got to the middle of the palate that the depth and intensity of flavours became evident. But take it to the table and it's something else again very good wine indeed.

A\$30 | [www.giant-steps.com.au](http://www.giant-steps.com.au)

**CorneliusBellarine Peninsula Syrah 2005:** A new range of wines from Scotchman's Hill (Geelong) which could take some explaining, so I'm not going to bother, but this is Syrah, not Shiraz. Very savory on the nose, works on two levels in the mouth: long slow build up on the upper level but intriguing fruit/tannin/acid underneath, all tightly bound. I just loved it.

A\$45 | [www.scotchmanshill.com.au](http://www.scotchmanshill.com.au)

**Blackjack 'Major's Line' Bendigo Shiraz 2005:** Sweet oak nose and oak dominant palate

spoils what is undoubtedly good grapes and what could be great wine.

A\$25 [www.blackjackwines.net.au](http://www.blackjackwines.net.au)

**Fairbank Bendigo Syrah 2004:** Faint fruitcake /earthy nose intriguing and hard to pin down. The wine becomes more interesting in the mouth - there is so much going on yet it is a very tight profile. Beautiful finish, a real joy of a wine.

A\$25 [www.suttongrangewines.com](http://www.suttongrangewines.com)

**Barnadown Run Heathcote Shiraz 2004:** Rich black earth with a hint of spice on the nose. A hint of sour cherry on the palate along with several other hard-to-identify flavours; a very different style but very good.

A\$27 [www.barnadownrun.com.au](http://www.barnadownrun.com.au)

**Green Point Heathcote Shiraz 2005:** Plums are what I found on the nose, maybe even a bit of prune; anyhow, this wine has beautiful intensity and an ever-increasing complexity as it travels with a long finish; an immensely satisfying wine to drink.

A\$29 [www.greenpointwines.com.au](http://www.greenpointwines.com.au)

There are plenty of Shiraz wines made in Victoria but there is not a 'Victorian Shiraz' style: so many styles, fascinating variation.

Kulkurt 'Volcanic'  
Grampians 2005

Value

Giant Steps 'Miller  
06 Vineyard' Yarra  
Val

Value

CorneliusBellarine  
PeninsulaSyrah  
05

Value

Blackjack 'Major's  
Line' Bendigo  
2005

Value

Fairbank Bendigo  
Syrah 2004

Value

Barnadown Run  
04 Heathcote  
Shiraz

Value

Green Point 2005  
Heathcote Shiraz

Value

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### The WA Trio

**X&Y Margaret River Shiraz 2005:** A trendy brand put out by Evans & Tate. The notes describe the nose as 'dusty notes of cedar and spice' and that is spot on. Good broad flavour with tannin/acid grip, also worked well with food.

A\$18 | [www.mcwilliamswines.com](http://www.mcwilliamswines.com)

**Evans & Tate Margaret River Shiraz 2004:** As I write my review I notice the notes say 2005 but the bottle is vintage 2004 - perhaps the wrong bottle was sent. Too late to do much about it now - this 2004 was OK, above average but not outstanding.

A\$22 | [www.mcwilliamswines.com](http://www.mcwilliamswines.com)

**Cape Mentelle Margaret River Shiraz 2005:** I would have to check with the winery to find out if previous vintages have been this high in alcohol (15%). I only noticed this because the wine had the wrong mouth feel - it just didn't feel right. Up to that point it was fine - great nose, hints of spice with a pepper lift. Full flavours but all forward and not coming together for a satisfying finish.

A\$36 | [www.capementelle.com.au](http://www.capementelle.com.au)

X&Y Margaret  
River Shiraz 2005

Value

Evans & Tate 2004  
Margaret River

Value

Cape Mentelle 2005  
Margaret River

Value

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### ShirazViognier Blends (SV)

**Wirra Wirra 'Catapult' McLaren Vale Shiraz Viognier 2006:** A wine only available 'on premise' (in restaurants/bars); a 'buxom' wine in all departments and freely giving as well. It's very much a sensual wine - not intellectual. Therefore drink and enjoy it, but don't try to analyse it a great deal.

A\$20 [www.wirra.com.au](http://www.wirra.com.au)

**The Black Chook Shiraz Viognier 2006:** Along the lines of the Wirra Wirra 'Catapult' but a step or two behind .

A\$18 [www.woopwoop.com.au](http://www.woopwoop.com.au)

**Penny's Hill 'Red Dot' Shiraz Viognier 2006:** The Wirra, Chook and Dot draw all, or most of their fruit from McLaren Vale. Comparisons can be found in the rich fruit style and texture, and in the lack of refinement – big wines for fun occasions.

A\$15 [www.pennyshill.com.au](http://www.pennyshill.com.au)

**Yalumba 'Hand Picked' Barossa Shiraz Viognier 2005:** The Viognier lift on the nose is evident, soft on entry, firms towards the middle, top notes are soft red/black fruits (raspberry/blackberry) underscored by acid/tannin good length.

A\$26 [www.yalumba.com](http://www.yalumba.com)

**Goundrey 'G' Shiraz/Viognier 2005:** Before tasting the wine, I read the accompanying notes; read these notes and you'll never want to taste the wine - no doubt the local kinder had great fun putting them together! As for the wine, it's good: several interesting hints of this or that on the nose to make you want to taste. Sits square on entry, fruit darting to one side with tannin/acid to the other. The texture of the wine brings it into line mid journey, it's a chewy number with plenty of grip; works well with food.

A\$22 [www.goundrey.com](http://www.goundrey.com)

Wirra Wirra 2006  
'Catapult' SV

Value

The Black Chook  
SV 2006

Value

Penny's Hill 'Red  
Dot' SV 2006

Value

Yalumba SV 'Hand  
Picked' Barossa  
05

Value

Goundrey 'G'  
Shiraz/Viognier  
2005

Value

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### Shiraz and allsorts (SAL)

**Barnadown Run 'Henry Bennett's Voluptuary' 2004:** The wine is from Heathcote in Victoria; there is a story behind the name and the blend is Shiraz 60% Cabernet 25% Malbec 15%. Simple, clean nose, starts slowly; is medium in weight with very good length. I found the flavours hard to pin down but that doesn't matter as they are extremely interesting and fine, not flabby.

A\$36 | [www.barnadownrun.com.au](http://www.barnadownrun.com.au)

**Angove's 'Butterfly Ridge' Shiraz Cabernet 2006:** Let's not get overexcited with wine blabber...damn good glass of wine at the price.

A\$7 | [www.angoves.com.au](http://www.angoves.com.au)

**Penny's Hill McLaren Vale Shiraz Cabernet Merlot 2005:** Hint of chocolate on the nose, hint of pepper on the palate (yes I got it the right way around). An easy-flowing wine that shows some surprising depths; it lingers on the finish, leaving the drinker thinking about what has been drunk.

A\$17 | [www.pennyshill.com.au](http://www.pennyshill.com.au)

**Temple Bruer 'Preservative Free' Langhorne Creek Shiraz Malbec 2007:** Organically grown grapes, preservative-free wine making and the price is not bad. It has a lot going for it but it still has to perform as a wine; slightly dusty/musty nose but within acceptable bounds, dry on entry and retains a tart edge throughout its journey; no great depth and works better with food. Its extra value (see chart) is worth it for those suffering allergies.

A\$18 | [www.templebruer.com.au](http://www.templebruer.com.au)

**Jacobs Creek 'Three Vines' Shiraz Cabernet Tempranillo 2007:** My theory is the new 'Three Vines' range is just to get an unusual grape (Tempranillo) in front of the consumer - there's a white with Viognier in the blend and a rosé with Sangiovese. I don't mind this at all as it will help others who make more focused wines from these varieties. This has a very

good nose but falls down on the palate – it's not *that* interesting. What part the Tempranillo plays is hard to define nor is the quantity given, therefore it's swamped by the others. It worked better with food.

A\$15 [www.jacobs-creek.com](http://www.jacobs-creek.com)

Barnadown Run  
Voluptuary SAL  
2004

Value

Angove's 'Butterfly  
Ridge' SAL 2006

Value

Penny's Hill SAL  
2005

Value

Temple Bruer 2007  
'Preservative Free'

Value

JacobsCreek'Three  
Vines' 2007

Value

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