



The one *true* *Aussie* wine

Photography by Tony Tervoert

Of all the varietal wines and blends that Australia makes, it is the judicious marriage of Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz which is peculiarly our own.

Even if the French were permitted to assemble these grapes under their restrictive Appellation Controllee system (which they are not), it is doubtful the winemakers of Bordeaux (where Cabernet is grown) and the Rhone (where Shiraz is king) would get on well enough to consummate the act.

In Australia where freedom reigns supreme, winemakers as far back as the late 1800s were blending what they called claret from the two grape varieties. They discovered that the lean elegance and structure of Cabernet provided a perfect foil for rich, voluptuous Shiraz, creating a drink which was smooth and velvety, but which

also had great cellaring characteristics.

However, it wasn't until the 1950s and 1960s that the blend was re-discovered, notably by Penfolds Grange creator Max Schubert. In fact Penfolds Bin 60A, made by Schubert in 1962 and widely considered the best wine ever made in Australia was just such a blend, proving that the whole is often greater than the sum of its parts. Even world famous Grange still gets a splash of Cabernet!

While one has to pay upwards of \$5,000 for a bottle of Bin 60A or \$500 for Grange, Penfolds Bin 389 continues to be acknowledged as the most accessible and collectable Cabernet Shiraz blend. At less than \$50 a bottle this "poor man's Grange" is still one of the great buys in Australia today.

Many other wineries have also persisted

with the style, notably Yalumba whose superlative Signature Cabernet Shiraz honours a staff member or friend of the winery on its label every year. The virtually unprocurable The Reserve is also an outstanding example of the style.

Due to fashion, other blends such as Shiraz-Viognier or Shiraz-Grenache have taken over from the honest Cab-Shiraz. But two wine writers Matthew Jukes and Tyson Stelzer launched the Great Australian Red competition in 2006 to flush out the best examples of this style and since then there seems to have been a minor resurgence—especially where the wine started in the Barossa.

These local examples, judged by the crew at 1918 Bistro in Tanunda, provide a good introduction for anyone visiting the region this winter.

The 1918 Bistro Top Five

2003 Diggers Bluff Watch Dog Cabernet Shiraz

RRP: \$32.00

Nose: Rich, dark fruit with clove and savoury characters.

Palate: Chocolate and poached figs with clove and spice undertones. A big full palate.

Finish: Great length with fantastic tannin structure.

Food Match: Who needs food!

2004 David Franz Alexander's Reward Cabernet Shiraz

RRP: \$36.00

Nose: Cherry, raspberry fruits and some spice.

Palate: Sweet fruit palate with blueberry undertones. A plump mouthfeel.

Finish: Long and smooth. Well rounded.

Food Match: Roast duck with grilled nectarine and watercress salad.

2002 Yalumba The Reserve Cabernet Shiraz

RRP: \$109.95*

Nose: Berry and chocolate flavours with spicy cinnamon characters.

Palate: Greener, more eucalypt tones here, with some fig fruit flavours.

Finish: Front palate tannins. Holding up well.

Food Match: Confit of duck with roast parsnip and silverbeet.

2006 Soul Growers Shiraz Cabernet

RRP: \$25.00

Nose: Berry compote, berry smoothie flavours.

Palate: A fruit driven wine with stewed strawberry flavours and soft tannin.

Finish: Medium finish that leaves the palate feeling fresh.

Food Match: Braised rabbit stew or duck.

2007 Flaxman Wines The Stranger Shiraz Cabernet

RRP: \$35.00

Nose: Sweet berries, full nose with great colour.

Palate: Black currant fruit front and sides with good balanced tannins and some spice.

Finish: Dry finish balanced with some lingering fruit and spice.

Food Match: Venison or a cheese plate with aged cheddar to finish.

*Limited availability. Contact info@yalumba.com



The List

- 2002 Yalumba D Black Sparkling Cabernet Shiraz
- 2007 Tomfoolery Son of a Gun Cabernet Shiraz
- 2007 Flaxman Wines The Stranger Shiraz Cabernet
- 2007 Yalumba The Scribbler Cabernet Shiraz
- 2006 Bethany Shiraz Cabernet
- 2006 God's Hill Amo 'Rosso Shiraz Cabernet Merlot
- 2006 Glen Eden Wines Kicking Back Shiraz Cabernet
- 2006 TeAro Estate Jokers Grin Shiraz Cabernet
- 2006 Soul Growers Shiraz Cabernet
- 2006 Glaetzer Anaperenna Shiraz Cabernet
- 2006 Schwarz Wine Co Cabernet Shiraz
- 2006 Henschke Keyneton Estate Euphonium (Shiraz, Cabernet, Cabernet Franc, Merlot)
- 2005 Yalumba The Signature
- 2004 Linfield Road The Slab Hut Shiraz Cabernet
- 2004 Yalumba FDR1A Cabernet Shiraz
- 2004 David Franz Alexander's Reward Cabernet Shiraz
- 2003 Diggers Bluff Watch Dog Cabernet Shiraz
- 2002 Yalumba The Reserve Cabernet Shiraz