

THISTLEDOWN



PRESS REVIEWS

We are very proud of the 3rd party endorsements for our wines.
We know we make good wine but it is always good to get awesome
feedback! Check out these impressive ratings and reviews.



THISTLEDOWN



'Thistledown is a conflation of wisdom, foresight and strident confidence; an assemblage of talent, superb old-vine sites and remarkable wines that have established a firmament at the top of the grenache totem in this country. Giles Cooke and Fergal Tynan – each a master of wine, historian and lover of the world's finest grenache – became tired of international stereotypes of Australian wine. With vast experience respectively making and selling wines from Spain, they began to carve out a niche defined by filigreed precision, thirst-slaking tannins and crunchy red fruit elements. These are small-batch micro-ferments handled in the right vessels and extracted with aplomb. They unravel as exquisite expressions to be sure.'

Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

'Thistledown is fast-becoming one of the great stories of Oz fine wine.'

Madigan Media (Anthony Madigan)

'They rival the very finest in the world.'

Top 100 Wines James Suckling (Ned Goodwin MW)

'Winemaker Giles Cooke MW is somewhat of a folk hero these days, thanks to his work championing the grenache variety. His Thistledown wines have appeared in every one of the last five Best Reports, and they are universally loved by all who taste them.'

Best Australian Wines (Matthew Jukes)

'A card of sophistication at the Barossan table. Appreciated, too, just how delineated and transparent the suite of shiraz at this address has become, echoing the grenaches.'

JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

'Among Australia's very greatest reds.'

Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

'Raise a glass to the best of the best...Grenache, the key obsession of Brits Giles Cooke MW and Fergal Tynan MW. Shiraz runs a distant but similarly high-quality second. These guys are part of a very exciting modern grenache movement in McLaren Vale, sourcing grapes from some of the highest and best vineyards.'

The Real Review (Huon Hooke) Top Wineries Australia

'The Gorgeous range of wines from Thistledown are just that: uncomplicated, sleek, classy quaffers. Very good things.'

Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)



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GORGEOUS GRENACHE BLANC

2023

93pts & Special Value - Halliday Wine Companion
91pts JamesSuckling.com

2022

92pts Halliday Wine Companion
92pts JamesSuckling.com
92pts Decanter
90pts Robert Parkers Wine Advocate

2021

92pts Wine Front
90pts (BEST NEW RELEASES) GT Wine
90pts James Suckling

2020

92pts Halliday Wine Companion
92pts The Real Review
91pts Wine Front
BRONZE MEDAL Royal Adelaide Wine Show 2020

2023

93pts & Special Value Star Halliday Wine Companion (James Halliday)
91pts JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

The best vintage of this super value wine. Mid-weighted and very expressive, delivering a textural loom of viscosity and phenolics, unravelling an edgy thread of freshly cut mint, yellow plum, guava and a truss of dried herb strewn across a long weave. A wine for the drinker who prizes texture as much as the one who gets a thrill from more obvious fruit.

2022

92pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)
92pts JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

From an established site in the Vale, in addition to a new one in Riverland. Cellaring capacity has been increased, allowing for extended skin work. And it shows. Fermented wild in an egg and used French oak. Light years from the last vintage, showcasing poached quince, rooibos and the juiciest nashi pear imaginable, all blended with fennel and pistachio. Mid-weighted and layered, a trajectory of fruit sweetness and a spherical texture all sitting in the mouth with an immaculate poise. We should be making more wine like this!

92pts Decanter (Rise of the Riverland: 15 top wines to try)

A blend of mature Riverland and biodynamic McLaren Vale fruit, whole-bunch pressed and oxidatively handled before wild fermentation in concrete and older oak. The nose is rather shy, with a restrained minerality pushing through ripe nashi pear, orange rind and subtle chamomile note. What a nubile and generous palate though! A finely milled texture and lively acidity keep this wine in harmony with the lemon skin, pear flesh, green apple and almond tone. The finish conjures up sundried sea salt on a rocky shore. A win for South Australian Grenache Blanc!

90pts Erin Larkin, Robert Parkers Wine Advocate

After doing many tastings of Grenache Blanc (from barrel or tank) in McLaren Vale in June 2022, I am utterly convinced that this is a variety that goes well in South Australia and is a variety that bears many opportunities for producers in the future. Most importantly, as a drinker, it is delicious. The 2022 Gorgeous Grenache Blanc is filled to the brim with spiced pear, crunchy green apple, lychees and brine. The acidity is juicy, and the whole thing has a satisfying, endless summer vibe to it. Though it's not complex, it's so delicious that it does not matter.



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Huon Hooke, The Real Review

Very light, bright colour; aromas are elusive but clean, with a trace of straw, a hint of honeysuckle, the palate restrained, very dry and delicate, with tension and refinement. It's certainly not your fat, flabby grenache blanc style. Indeed, the opposite. Appetising, more-ish wine.

2021

92pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

It looks a very promising vintage in South Australia, 2021.

They've got this just right. Offers some perfume, fleshy lemon and green pear flavour, balanced acidity, a pleasing saline feel, chalky texture, and a slightly bitter 'real lemonade' aftertaste on a finish of good length. Affable. Charming. Great to drink.

90 points (BEST NEW RELEASES) – Gourmet Traveller Wine (Nick Stock)

Aromas of sliced ripe pear and a little lemon, this is a bright and fresh white. The palate strikes the right drinkability with refreshment and the result is an effortless, gently fleshy white with a crisp finish.

90 points - James Suckling (Nick Stock)

I like the mix of fresh-pear and lemon aromas and flavors that this delivers. The palate has some freshness and cut with a soft, fleshy core. Easygoing. A blend of Riverland and McLaren Vale.

2020

92 points – Halliday Wine Companion (Tony Love)

Obsessed grenache enthusiasts, Thistledown have searched out a few blocks of its white variant for this perky little number. Aromas of poached pear (fruit and liquid), a faint spice note, perhaps a honeysuckle vibe, all held neatly in check. While there's a lovely tang mid palate, the drinking reveals a mouth-watering chalky texture that stays in the zone effortlessly. Lots to like here.

92 points - Stuart Knox, The Real Review

Medium straw-gold colour. Very exotic nose, honeysuckle, cinnamon and green apple notes. The palate is all zip and zing. White berries, lemon thyme and saline minerality all combine with a taut acid line and a dusty fuzz of phenolics. This variety should have a great future in Australia.

91pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

It's instantly appealing on the nose showing raspberry, cranberry, citrus and floral aromas, followed by a juicy palate that's lively and lingering. The wine offers pristine fruit flavours together with rounded mouthfeel and vibrant acidity, finishing long and mouth-watering. At its best: now to 2021.

BRONZE MEDAL Royal Adelaide Wine Show 2020



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GREAT ESCAPE CHARDONNAY

<p>2022 93pts Halliday 93pts JamesSuckling 92pts Wine Advocate</p> <p>2021 93pts Halliday 91pts Wine Front</p>	<p>2019 90pts James Suckling</p>	<p>2018 90pts The Wine Advocate 90pts The Wine Front</p>	<p>2017 93pts Natasha Hughes MW 90pts Halliday</p> <p>2015 93pts Tony Keys</p>	<p>2014 92pts Tony Keys 91pts The Wine Front 90pts James Suckling</p>
<p>2022</p>	<p>93pts & Special Value, Ned Goodwin MW, Halliday Wine Companion 93pts Ned Goodwin MW, JamesSuckling.com Wild fermented in a combination of used French oak and a concrete egg. Mlf was discouraged to retain acidity. More flavourful than in recent years. Stone and orchard fruits spill across gentle acid rails. The fruit intensity verges on palate staining, yet the feel is mid-weighted, nicely slippery, moderately fresh and not dissimilar to a Mâcon from a warmer vintage, despite it being a cooler one in these parts. 92pts Erin Larkin, Robert Parkers Wine Advocate The 2022 Great Escape Chardonnay is from the Eden Valley, in Barossa, and shows all the mineral tannin and subtle nuttiness that we expect from the region. I enjoyed this more than previous vintages, perhaps due to the extreme youth of the wine, which cauterizes some of the tropical fruit characters that seem to emerge with the high diurnal range of the area, replacing them with a cooling, mineral feel. Very good, lean and taut.</p>			
<p>2021</p>	<p>93pts Ned Goodwin MW, Halliday Wine Companion Compact and more tightly strung than its predecessor. A great vintage. Classy oak sets the tone, imparting cedar, vanilla and toasted hazelnut accents while evincing structural authority. The acidity, palpably natural. Beyond, nectarine, white peach and lees-derived nougat, dried tatami straw and truffle. I'd like to see this with full malolactic conversion. A fine effort. 91pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Fine-boned wine offering white peach, nougat, and a little spicy oak. It's fresh, not so concentrated, but lovely to drink, a fine dusty texture, and ripe lemon, with a gently nutty finish of solid length. A pleasing cool feel to the wine, and I'd suggest it will develop quite nicely over the next couple of years.</p>			
<p>2019</p>	<p>90pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com</p>			
<p>2018</p>	<p>90pts Robert Parker's The Wine Advocate 90pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Once upon a time, the label was quite plain, and in a review of the 2014, I commented on Steve McQueen on a motorcycle, going through the Adelaide Hills.</p>			
<p>2017</p>	<p>93pts Natasha Hughes WM,</p>	<p>2015 93pts Tony Keys, 90pts Halliday</p>		



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WALKING WITH KINGS ROUSSANNE GRENACHE BLANC

2022

95pts Halliday Wine Companion

95pts JamesSuckling.com

94pts Wine Front

93pts Robert Parkers Wine Advocate

93pts Decanter

16.5/20 points JancisRobinson.com

2022

95pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

95pts JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

A blend of 60% roussanne, the remainder grenache blanc. This is excellent. The kind of varieties, despite the young vines, boding so well for a bright future. Tatami straw, lemon drop, quinine, pickled stone fruits and ginger. Long and drawn out across a spindle of tannin chew as much as an intuitive verb of maritime freshness. Soft, mind you, but perfectly positioned. A mid-weighted wine of textural tapestry, poise and verve.

94pts - The Wine Front (Gary Walsh)

Lemon zest, honey and almond, green apple and pear, with a little perfume of aniseed and dried herb. It's waxy and rich, yet fresh and bright with tart white fleshed fruit, a chalky and gently bitter phenolic pucker, a distinctly saline/oyster shell character, with honey gloss and a pithy finish of excellent length. You have to dig these white Rhône styles, maybe, though I like this a lot.

93pts Erin Larkin, Robert Parkers Wine Advocate

The 2022 Walking With Kings Roussanne Grenache Blanc was sourced from McLaren Vale. Both varieties were handpicked and barrel fermented utilizing wild yeasts. The nose is soft and round with honeydew melon, spiced pear and orchard fruits. In the mouth, the wine is both complex and pert; the texture is complex and softened, thanks to the élevage in oak, while the acidity is tense and bright—a handy juxtaposition in a summer wine. Very smart.

93pts Decanter (Wines for the Weekend)

A new wine from this exciting label: Roussanne fermented in 25% new French oak and biodynamically farmed Grenache Blanc oxidatively fermented in concrete. Bold yet elegant, waxy quince, apricot blossom and a fresh apple crunch with a chalky texture.

16.5/20 points - JancisRobinson.com

60% Roussanne, fermented in French oak (30% new). 40% Grenache Blanc fermented separately, mostly in concrete. The name is a reference to the poem 'If' by Kipling. Lovely pure apricot fruit, very well-integrated high acid (too often these wines taste over-acidified, but not this one). There's a bitter herbal finish that really works, giving a savoury twist to the ripe but restrained fruit. (RH)



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SUILVEN CHARDONNAY

2019 93+pts The Wine Front 93pts James Suckling 93pts Wine Advocate	2018 95pts Nick Butler 92+pts The Wine Front 92pts The Wine Advocate 91pts James Halliday 90pts James Suckling	2017 95pts Halliday 94pts Huon Hooke 93pts The Wine Front 92pts James Suckling	2016 95pts Halliday
2019	<p>93pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front ‘Most often, the best policy with wax capsules is just to go straight in with the corkscrew and wrench hard. I’ve cut my fingers too many times trying to be fancy like a sommelier. Don’t get me started on that hard chippy wax that Foillard and Raveneau use... Anyway, concrete egg and barrel used in this wine, fruit hand-picked from a single vineyard, though I’m not sure which vineyard that is. Spicy Japanese ginger oak, almond, a minor amount of struck match, white peach and lemon zest. It’s fine and slightly milky in texture, has a soft grip and texture, again the ginger over peach and pink grapefruit. It finishes pretty long, with an almost chalky texture. High quality, obviously still quite young, and feels in evolution; like it’s going somewhere better, for sure.’</p> <p>93pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com ‘Attractive lemon-pastry aromas with grapefruit and a gently flinty edge, too. The palate has a fresh, juicy feel with bright lemons, as well as a layered texture and white peaches to close. All here. Drink over the next five years.’</p> <p>93pts Wine Advocate ‘Hand-harvested from a few rows of a single vineyard and fermented in barrel and concrete egg, there are only 820 bottles of the very fine 2019 Suilven Chardonnay. Boasting restrained aromas of pencil shavings, pear and citrus, it’s medium-bodied but generous, with a wonderfully silky texture on the palate, round, ripe melon flavors and a harmonious, lingering finish. Drink it over the next 4–5 years.’</p>		
2018	<p>95pts Nick Butler, The Real Review Wild honey and nougat, figs and lemon flesh - a complex and slightly wild bouquet. When sipped, it shows a rare minerality and softness, just enough acidity and fruit flesh to compel the next sip. Immense potential. Beautifully made.</p> <p>92+pts The Wine Front White peach, lemon, cinnamon, vanilla and almond. Light to medium-bodied, white fleshed fruits, cool acidity and dusty texture, has a slightly peppery edge too, nutty savoury flavours and a delicate finish, with a little chalk and lemon rind to close. It’s elegant almost to the point of being neutral, though it does speak of modern Hills Chardonnay; sotto voce.</p> <p>92pts The Wine Advocate The 2018 Suilven Chardonnay comes from just three rows of handpicked fruit in the Adelaide Hills, which yielded just over 100 cases. Modest hints of toast and smoke frame notes of white peach and citrus in this silky-textured, medium-bodied effort. It’s an easy-drinking wine, but it has more intensity than the Great Escape Chardonnay and enough acid backbone to think it should drink well through 2024.</p> <p>91pts James Halliday Wine Companion ‘This is an artisanal light to barely mid-weighted chardonnay. Fermented wild in both barrel and concrete egg, before extended lees contact and blending across a ruthless barrel selection. The aromas are subdued, with butter scotch, finger lime and oatmeal flavours expanding across the mouth with some air injection. The finish, gentle, effortless and of decent linger. A work in progress.’</p> <p>90pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com</p>		



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2017	<p>95pts James Halliday Hand-picked from a single vineyard, whole-bunch pressed, wild-fermented in both barrel and a concrete egg, extended lees maturation before a strict barrel selection. A worthy wine, introducing complexity without diminishing the stone fruit and grapefruit varietal expression.</p> <p>94pts Huon Hooke Very light colour. A shy, reserved and youthfully straightforward minerally bouquet, which is nevertheless clean and fresh. The palate is also reserved and tight, also clean, intense and refined, with some nutty lees and oak subtleties, and a very long, intense aftertaste. Refined and pure. A lovely wine with a future.</p> <p>93pts The Wine Front Adelaide Hills chardonnay. Wild yeast, high solids, a combination of concrete eggs and new French oak. Effortless chardonnay. Elegance is both its surname and its title. Everything here feels free to roam. Chalk, spice, stonefruit and vanilla pods. Everything light and airy, succulent, arms outstretched, open to the world. You get the picture. It's a pleasure to spend time with it.</p> <p>92pts James Suckling Attractive, fresh white-peach and lemon aromas with gentle, praline-like oak nuances and baking spices. The palate has a fresh, pure and lively core of lemons and mangoes. Drink now.</p>
2016	<p>95pts James Halliday Ultra-deluxe packaging. Leviathan bottle, high-quality cork (well, it costs more than a screwcap), and then my bête noire: the grey-black label with red font reads 'Bottle no. 313'. Of 314 or 5000 bottles? Stuff it, I do love the moody label. The wine? I'm very acid-tolerant, and always have been. This trembles on the brink. 13% alc. To: 2026.</p>



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GORGEOUS GRENACHE ROSÉ

2022

90pts Robert Parkers Wine Advocate
91pts The Real Review

2020

95pts & TOP VALUE The Real Review
92pts & GREAT VALUE Halliday

2021

GOLD MEDAL Global Fine Wine Challenge 2021
16.5/20 points JancisRobinson.com

2019

93pts Sam Kim, Wine Orbit
92pts Nick Butler

2023

Erin Larkin, Robert Parkers Wine Advocate

Shock! This 2023 Gorgeoous Grenache Rosé is bright and fragrant, but this year it smells of tropical thiols, passion fruit and pineapple. If served to me in a black glass, I'd swear blind that this was a Sauvignon Blanc from Marlborough. The palate is soft and wide, in keeping with the phenolic, low-acid profile of Grenache; however, it still behaves like a complex Sauvignon Blanc. I can't get over it. It's crunchy, fresh and bright, tropical. This is lovely summer drinking here.

Ned Goodwin MW JamesSuckling.com

Fruit is swept in from across the state to craft a tactile, mid-weighted rosé, packing a parry of fruit and a thrust of just the right amount of structural tension, doused in refreshing salinity. Crushed musk, cranberry, orange pekoe and lavender. The mid-coral hue espouses confidence, rather than suggesting anything anodyne or herbal. A subtle drape of sweetness across the finish.

2022

90pts Erin Larkin, Robert Parkers Wine Advocate

The Gorgeoous range of wines from Thistledown are just that: uncomplicated, sleek, classy quaffers. Very good things. This 2022 Gorgeoous Grenache Rosé is fresh and bright, with summer raspberries, a flick of exotic spice and some green tea tannins through the finish. Very good summer drinking!

91pts Stuart Knox, The Real Review

Bright coral pink hue. Fragrant with classic strawberries and cream notes but also a hint of bitter herbs too. Has a depth and weight on the palate which appeals as the ripe red berries and amaro herb notes layer across the tongue. Good length and finely framed acidity carries it long. Food will be beneficial here as well.

Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

A duo of established sources, one trellised and the other bush vines. A mid-weighted rosé opting for fully flared flavour. Spain is the likely inspiration given the background of the MWs in charge. Think rosewater, musk, marasca cherry and bergamot, with a sluice of sweet fruit slipping over the seams of freshness.

2021

GOLD MEDAL Global Fine Wine Challenge 2021
16.5/20 points JancisRobinson.com

Pale baby pink. Pleasingly unconfected on the nose, and there's the same sort of herbal garnish that their white Roussanne/Grenache Blanc shows. It's weighty but not heavy. The fruit gives a lot of primary pleasure and has a serious edge that is very savoury and gastronomic. (RH)

2020

95pts & TOP VALUE - Amanda Yallop, The Real Review



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Flamingo-pink hue. Intense bouquet, rose water, Aperol, red berries, sweet vanilla and clove. Dry, savoury and spicy flavour profile, ripe apples, cranberry, red skins and toast. Medium-bodied, with a slippery texture that indicates extended time spent on lees.

92 pts & GREAT VALUE - Tony Love, Halliday

Glossy salmon pink, with all the nice things grenache does in rosé land. Lifted strawberry smells, promising a creaminess even early on. There's just enough tang of fresh red berries, just enough talc-like feel in the mouth, just enough light spice to spruik the lingering finish. All that's needed is a sunny afternoon and fun friends.

2019

93pts Sam Kim, Wine Orbit

92pts Nick Butler



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GORGEOUS GRENACHE

<p>2022 90pts The Real Review 90pts Halliday Wine Companion 90pts JamesSuckling.com Silver Medal Texusom</p>	<p>2021 92pts The Wine Front 91pts Decanter 90pts & BEST BUY Wine Enthusiast 90pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate 90pts & TOP VALUE The Real Review 90pts Halliday 16/20 points JancisRobinson.com</p>	<p>2020 93pts Wine Orbit 92pts Ray Jordan 91pts Halliday Wine Companion 90pts Vinous</p> <p>2019 94pts Wine Orbit 92pts The Wine Front 90pts Wine Spectator</p>	<p>2018 92pts Halliday 92pts Suckling 91pts Wine Front</p> <p>2017 - 16pts Jancis Robinson 2016 - 91 pts The Wine Front</p>
<p>2022</p>	<p>90pts - Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) 90pts - JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW) Sourced from a patchwork of older sites in Riverland, with back-burners of shiraz (4%) and mataro (1%) in the mix. Wild fermented in large neutral oak with a good seasoning of whole bunches. No fining or filtering, serving to retain the integrity of fruit while promoting its natural energy. Sappy, fruity and punchy. Full-bodied, yet you'd hardly know it. Nothing at all heavy here. Drinks like a candied pinot, reeling off notes of rosehip, maraschino cherry and Seville orange before a bristle of bunched tannins concludes.</p> <p>90pts - Huon Hooke, The Real Review Bright medium depth purple-red hue with a beautifully fragrant aroma of rose petals, mixed spices and red fruits, raspberry uppermost. It's light bodied and soft, low in tannin and easy drinking young. A short but pretty grenache.</p>		
<p>2021</p>	<p>92pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front 'Juicy red fruits, almond, a fair bit of spice, perfume and a little mint. Medium-bodied, a light dusting of tannin, clean acidity, red fruit succulence, but keeps itself dry and almost a little serious. Finish is good, gently saline, with playful tannin and quiet perfume. Delightful. Top value.'</p> <p>91pts Decanter (Rise of the Riverland: 15 top wines to try) Fruit from Riverland and McLaren Vale vineyards vinified separately using wild fermentation and whole-bunch inclusion. Bright red fruit aromas with a lifted pepper note. The palate is slurpy, moreish and nimble on it's feet, yet with sizeable length of flavour: strawberry, cranberry and star anise, with a slightly slatey minerality, fine tannins and a linear acid line. The supple fruit gives way to a savoury finish with meaty umami character. A great-value, lighter-bodied Grenache.</p>		



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90pts Erin Larkin, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate

'Having spent some time with Giles this past week tasting component parcels of each of the Grenache cuvées that he makes for the Thistledown range, I look at this 2021 Gorgeous Grenache in a whole new light. Yes, it is made in a juicy, easy-drinking fashion. However, the fruit quality that goes into this wine (from both Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale) builds a wine of eminent balance in the mouth. This is lighter-framed and shaped by fine powdery tannins, yet laden with juicy fruit. Plenty to love—drink it early.'

90pts & TOP VALUE - Huon Hooke, The Real Review

Medium red colour with a tinge of purple and the aromas are dried herbs and spices, blackberry jam and a suggestion of burnt blackberry jam. There's a core of sweet ripe fruit and then a wash of drying tannins sweeps through. Bold, straightforward and very attractive.

90pts Ned Goodwin MW, Halliday Wine Companion

Bright, tangy and easy. Black cherry, raspberry, orange zest and a grind of white pepper. Feels suave and mid weighted, rather than full. **A versatile everyday drinker.**

16/20 points JancisRobinson.com

Juice bomb (an important difference to fruit bomb!) with, yes, 'gorgeous' raspberry fruit and a simple, fresh, very drinkable style. Savoury finish with a touch of red liquorice and chocolate. (RH)

<p>2020</p>	<p>93pts Wine Orbit (Sam Kim) 92pts Ray Jordan 91pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) 90pts Vinous (Josh Reynolds)</p>	
<p>2019</p>	<p>94pts Sam Kim, Wine Orbit 92pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front 90pts Wine Spectator</p>	
<p>2018</p>	<p>92pts James Halliday 92pts James Suckling 91pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front</p>	<p>2017 16pts Jancis Robinson MW</p>



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THORNY DEVIL GRENACHE

2023

93pts JamesSuckling.com

93pts Wine Front

92pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate

2022

BEST 100 Aus Wines

Matthew Jukes

JUDGES SELECTION

Texsom

SILVER Decanter

World Wine Awards

SILVER McLaren Vale

Wine Show

95pts The Real

Review

94pts Halliday Wine

Companion

94pts

JamesSuckling.com

93pts Robert Parker

Wine Advocate

92pts The Wine Front

2021

95pts Robert Parker's

Wine Advocate

94pts The Wine Front

94pts (Editor's Choice)

Wine Enthusiast

94pts Halliday Wine

Companion

92pts The Real Review

2020

93pts JamesSuckling.com

91pts The Real Review

91pts Vinous

2019

95pts Halliday

93pts James

Suckling

93pts Halliday

92pts The Wine Front

91pts The Real

Review

BRONZE McLaren

Vale Wine Show 2020

91pts Wine Advocate

90pts Wine Spectator

2018

#1 2018 Barossa Valley

Grenache Huon Hooke

93pts Huon Hooke

93pts The Wine Front

90pts The Wine Advocate

2017

94pts Halliday

92pts Wine Front

92pts James Suckling

2023

93 points – Ned Goodwin MW, JamesSuckling.com

I always enjoy this wine, the entry point to the glories of McLaren Vale grenache, among the world's finest expressions of this variety. Tamarind, red cherries, mint and sap verging on rhubarb. Almost like a Beaujolais, and yet there is plenty of tannic grit. Cranberry, white pepper, clove and dried thyme notes on a long, gentle finish. Delicious. Screw cap. Drink or hold.

93 points – Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

From a selection of old bush vines across McLaren Vale. We don't know from where, but we trust Giles Cooke MW, Grenache enthusiast, who's probably over here right now, trailing about somewhere in SA. Cherry, mint, raspberry, something a little steely too, brown spicy and floral. It's medium-bodied, sappy cherry and coal dust, something a little ozone-like about it (don't mind me), with plump yet fine grained tannin grip, and a juicy finish of excellent length. Very nice. Fresh. Lively. Gustatory.

92 points – Erin Larkin, Robert Parker Wine Advocate

The 2023 Thorny Devil Grenache is routinely a rip-snorting little wine. Raspberry compote, orange peel, black tea, humbug candies and red licorice frame the



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bouquet, while on the palate the wine is plush, luxurious and velvety. It's really good—again!

2022

BEST 100 AUSTRALIAN WINES – Matthew Jukes Report (The best wines available in the UK)

Winemaker Giles Cooke MW is somewhat of a folk hero these days, thanks to his work championing the grenache variety. His Thistledown wines have appeared in every one of the last five Best Reports, and they are universally loved by all who taste them. This year, the wine that stood out for me was one of the less expensive wines in his portfolio, but I wouldn't have known this unless a price tag was stuck on the bottle. Thorny Devil is one of a series of wines I feel is shaped, almost identically, to a Pinot Noir. It is entirely different in flavour, of course, but this lightness of touch, palate pliability and ethereal leaning makes it a wine style that stands a chance of being appreciated by a wide range of palate. In terms of flavour, Giles' Grenaches range from the lightest cherry, raspberry and cranberry styles right up to darker mulberry and plum versions. At all rungs on the ladder the wines are fruit-driven, cleansing and refreshing. Thorny Devil is made from fruit sourced from various sites, and approximately 30% whole bunches are employed to add bitterness and grip, which offsets the gloriously juicy grenache fruit by adding tension to the whole. Old oak is used to not mark the wine or dry it out. I happen to think 2022 Thorny Devil is the finest value red wine Giles has made since he set out on his odyssey some 13 years ago. Nowadays a good few Aussies are applying their skills to championing this sensual grape, and you will find many of them in this report.

SILVER McLaren Vale Wine Show

SILVER Decanter World Wine Awards

95 points – Huon Hooke, The Real Review

Deep purple-red colour; the bouquet has raspberry and blackcurrant pastille aromas, complexed by gentle spice notes. The wine is medium-full bodied and laced with a delicious core of sweet fruit shrouded in emery-like tannins that impart pleasing structure. Good length: a very stylish modern grenache that can be enjoyed young.

94pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

94pts JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

While vintage '22 may not scale the heights of '21, it was another attenuated, Euro-styled year of poise, enough fruit weight and immense freshness. Savoury, the signature. I'll take that over obvious sweetness any day. The first cab off the premier rank. A subregional blend limited to old, dry-grown bush vines. Varying degrees of whole bunches. A number of picking windows, too, to embellish freshness and enough weight. Fermentation is ambient. **I'd be hard-pressed to find a better wine than this for the price.** Kirsch, ume, cranberry, bergamot and a scape of pixelated tannin, sandy of feel, directing length.

93 points – Erin Larkin, Robert Parker Wine Advocate

This is a super little wine. The 2022 Thorny Devil Grenache is spicy, supple and shaped, as all the Thistledown Grenaches are, by ductile, flowing tannins in the mouth. This has shape and form, but it is also a plump, cushioned little number that gives all manner of pleasure. It's a generous, smiling little thing, delicious. There are notes of blood, raspberry, red licorice and ferrous. It is sapid as all get up.

92 points – Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

A bit of mint, some char and meaty stuff, raspberry and strawberry, juicy with fine sandy tannin, a little dried rose, and a slightly gritty finish of good length. Good.

2021

95 points – Erin Larkin, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate



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Aromas of savory spice, hummus, chili meat and blood fill the senses, but it is in the mouth where the purity and succulence of the fruit is revealed. This 2021 Thorny Devil Grenache is long and savory, sweet and fine, built into a framework of pliable tannin and exotic spice. Balanced and exciting.

94 points - Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Perfumed, spicy, cherry and raspberry, almond and Earl Grey tea. It's medium-bodied, firm but ripe tannin with a graphite feel, kind of dry but succulent, raspberry and roses, with a pleasing tannic crunch and freshness to the long finish. Excellent Grenache. Invigorating.

94pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

'While this doesn't quite have the thrust of its more expensive siblings, the shimmy of florals and red-fruited fragrances, juxtaposed against a veil of diaphanous tannins, sandy and detailed, is impressive. Crunchy and tensile – although a little looser around the seams, for imminent pleasure – and thoroughly impressive.'

92 points – Huon Hooke, The Real Review

Deepish red/purple colour. Dried and fresh herbs to sniff, background jammy raspberries, the palate continuing the almost lush mouth-feel and fruit depth. It's quite intense and also fairly firm in the tannin department. Very good and has potential.

<p>2020</p>	<p>93pts JamesSuckling.com (Nick Stock) An attractively concentrated grenache with aromas of pomegranate and red berries, as well as berry pastry. Vibrant and concentrated on the palate, this delivers juicy textural spring and a good build of flavor and tannin.</p> <p>91pts The Real Review (Stuart Knox) Medium, intense ruby in the glass. A subdued nose of black fruits and dusty earth. The palate is heading into the full spectrum with plush black fruits and dark slate minerals. Firm and gripping tannins balance the weight and give good length. A touch raw currently but time will bring it together quickly.</p> <p>91pts Vinous (Josh Reynolds)</p>
<p>2019</p>	<p>95pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) One of the country's finest grenache producers, and on the back of a stellar suite of '18s, Thistledown can do little wrong.....</p> <p>93pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com 93pts Halliday Wine Companion 2021 92pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Rock solid. Good drinking here.</p> <p>91pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review 91pts Wine Advocate 90pts Wine Spectator</p>
<p>2018</p>	<p>#1 2018 Barossa Valley Grenache, 93pts Huon Hooke 93pts The Wine Front 90pts Nick Stock, The Wine Advocate</p>
<p>2017</p>	<p>94pts James Halliday 92pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front 92pts James Suckling 90pts The Wine Advocate</p>
<p>2016</p>	<p>94pts James Halliday 91pts Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front 90pts Huon Hooke</p>



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THE VAGABOND GRENACHE

2023

95pts The Wine Front
94pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate
93pts JamesSuckling.com

2022

96pts Halliday Wine Companion
96pts JamesSuckling.com
94pts The Wine Front
93pts The Real Review
MERIT WINE
92pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate
GOLD MEDAL Texsom
BRONZE McLaren Vale Wine Show

2021

TOP 100 AUSTRALIAN WINES
95pts JamesSuckling.com
95+pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate
95pts Halliday Wine Companion
95pts The Wine Front
95pts The Real Review
16.5/20 pts JancisRobinson

2020

96pts (5 stars) GT Wine
96pts JamesSuckling.com
95 pts Halliday
94pts The Wine Front
93pts The Real Review
93pts SILVER McLaren Vale Wine Show
93pts Vinous

2019

96pts JamesSuckling.com
95pts Halliday
94pts The Real Review
94pts The Wine Front
SILVER McLaren Vale Wine Show 2020
93pts Wines & Spirits Magazine
93pts Wine Spectator
91pts Wine Advocate

2018

Top 100 Australian Wines of the Year James Suckling
3x Trophies & 1x Gold McLaren Vale Wine Show 2019
Gold Six Nations Wine Challenge 2019
96pts Sarah Ahmed
95pts James Suckling, Halliday
95pts Huon Hooke
93+pts The Wine Front
92pts Wine Advocate

2017

Silver McLaren Vale Wine Show 2018
Silver Halliday Grenache Challenge 2018
96pts James Halliday
94pts Wine Front
92pts Huon Hooke

2023

95pts The Wine Front (Gary Walsh)

From four old vine, bush vine vineyards in Blewitt Springs. I'm all for single vineyard wines, though sometimes the sum of the parts makes for a more complete wine.

Raspberry, red cherry, violet perfume, some dried herb and spice. It's medium-bodied, crisp and quite frisky, all red fruits with with some blood orange and pomegranate, almonds too, tannin is all sort of crushed sandstone (or something like that), and the finish is aromatic, long and really quite pretty. Such energy. Lovely.

94pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)

The 2023 The Vagabond Old Vine Grenache is succulent and silky and leads with a bouquet as polished and supple as the palate—raspberry pip, cranberry, red cherry, licorice, star anise and layers of Earl Grey tea and violets. It has beautiful clarity and poise, but this is what we have come to expect from this producer. Classy wine.

93pts JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)



THISTLEDOWN



	<p>Beautifully fragrant, mid-weighted grenache. Red-fruit allusions, pomegranate, menthol, dried rose petal and orange zest. 2023 was another cooler attenuated vintage, the last and perhaps the most challenging of a La Nina troika. Elegance writ large here, somehow synergistic with a Mediterranean-accented cru Beaujolais, such is the imminence, freshness, gritty tannin and shimmering transparency.</p>
2022	<p>The Real Review Merit Wine Classification The Real Review Wine Classification comprises the greatest wines of Australia and New Zealand with an outstanding track record of a decade or longer. One merit wines reliably achieve gold and silver ribbons in recent vintages, with top vintages achieving 95 points or more.</p> <p>96pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) 96pts JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW) Blewitt Springs, an Australian grand cru equivalent. Old bush vines, as is the wont. Wild fermented with a good portion of whole bunches, some in concrete pyramids sans agitation, before ageing in concrete and large neutral oak. Brilliant! Like a slinky, before release over the top step, as riffs on persimmon, Seville orange, rosehip, pomegranate and impeccably ripe cherry clafoutis unwind and expand with a rattle. Long. A sandy scape of gorgeous tannins. World class.</p> <p>94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Cherry, strawberry, mint and menthol, orange peel. It's medium-bodied, a juicy red fruit flavour strewn with herbs and spice, supple tannin, and a juicy red fruited finish of fine length and spicy perfume. Nice.</p> <p>93pts Stuart Knox, The Real Review Bright ruby and purple tones in a glass that lifts with heady aromas of fresh crushed blueberries and thyme. Palate is bright and fresh with a ripe core of black fruits yet ample savoury dried herbs and meaty undertones already. A gravelly tannin profile ensures it carries long and dries into the finish.</p> <p>92pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin) You can rely on Thistledown for great Grenache. It's their thing. Here, the 2022 The Vagabond Old Vine Grenache leads with a vibrant display of red berries, exotic spices and black olive tapenade in merengue lockstep. There are also notes of poached strawberries, redcurrants, red apple skins and salted licorice. This is a lovely wine. It feels lighter than I remember the 2021 being. It is delicate. I love the bloody tannins, open-weave and chewy. The tannins are the highlight.</p> <p>BRONZE McLaren Vale Wine Show</p>
2021	<p>TOP 100 AUSTRALIAN WINES 95pts JamesSuckling.com Aromas of red cherries, baked strawberries, violets, crushed stones and suede. Medium- to full-bodied with silky tannins. Succulent and mouthwatering. Mineral notes add definition and a hint of saltiness, which creates wonderful integration with the pretty red fruit. Floral as well. Lovely. Vegan. Drink or hold. Screw cap.</p> <p>95+pts Erin Larkin, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate The 2021 The Vagabond Old Vine Grenache is exotic, fine and layered with silty, black tea tannins. It is the mid-palate onward where the succulence of fruit is revealed, and this comes across as fine but flows up with lithe, ripe fruit and complex spice notes. Eminently balanced and poised, this fills the mouth and the mind simultaneously. Yes.</p> <p>95pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) 'Such a fine vintage, reverberating across such a great wine. Pithy cherry, cranberry, raspberry bon-bon, anise, thyme and basil. The leitmotif, the thrust of a superbly extracted tannic kit, sandy and pixelated, juxtaposed against the parry of fruit so refined that one can only believe.'</p> <p>95pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front So much perfume here. Dried flowers, thyme, spice, orange peel, raspberry and strawberries. It's medium-bodied, quite tense and firm, fine sandy grip to tannin, brightness and so much energy, a subtle meaty edge, dry with plenty of grip and superb shape to the long finish, and fresh red fruits and fragrance to close. An outstanding expression of Grenache.</p> <p>16.5/20points JancisRobinson.com</p>



THISTLEDOWN



	<p><i>Blend of three or four vineyards every year. On average 50-year-old bush-vine Grenache. Sweet red fruit – redcurrant, raspberry, cranberry (like Pinot Noir but without the anaemia). Proper structural grip here, light in body but with furry tannin. Black-olive character on the finish. The delicate side of Grenache. (RH)</i></p> <p>95pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review</p> <p>Deep, bright red/purple colour, with a fragrant bouquet of black fruits and fresh herbs, aromatic and bold, a hint of coconut, the palate lusciously fruit-sweet at its heart and backed by firm but gentle tannins that are in good balance while supplying appropriate structure. Extra length. I'd give it a year more, but it's a good drink now. I especially enjoy its freshness and vitality.</p>
2020	<p>96pts (5 stars) Gourmet Traveller Wine (Nick Stock) An excellent expression of the powerful potential of old vine grenache from Blewitt Springs. Aromas of blood orange, raspberry and redcurrant, and savoury, stony notes. The palate has sleek, long and persistent shape, the raspberry and redcurrant flavours hold beautifully.</p> <p>96pts JamesSuckling.com (Nick Stock) A powerful and detailed grenache that offers up Campari-like red fruit and herbs with raspberries and iron. The palate is polished, in that there's plenty of ripe, deep-set tannin here, carrying red-fruit flavors long. Drink or hold.</p> <p>95pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) Borne by elevated sand, flecked with Blewitt Springs ironstone. A wine that sits below the single-vineyard hierarchy albeit can, at times, equal if not better them. Raspberry liqueur, anise, white pepper, lilac and orange zest. Gorgeous aromatics framed by herb-doused tannins. Pinosity and grip. Flare and excitement. Length of finish eased across a throttle of dangerous drinkability.</p> <p>94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Sourced from three old vine vineyards in Blewitt Springs. Ripe raspberry and cherry, rosemary and thyme, plenty of exotic spice. It's a lush and fragrant beast, but has cool cranberry acidity, stony tannin grip and a long fine chalky finish, with savoury dried beef and herb chiming in on the aftertaste. Excellent.</p> <p>93 points - The Real Review (Stuart Knox) 93pts SILVER McLaren Vale Wine Show 93pts Vinous (Josh Reynolds)</p>
2019	<p>96pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com 95pts Halliday Wine Companion 2021 94pts Nick Butler, The Real Review 94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front 93pts Wines & Spirits Magazine 93pts Wine Spectator 91pts Wine Advocate</p>
2018	<p>Top 100 Australian Wines of the Year: Number 99, James Suckling Trophy: Grenache McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2019 Trophy: Best One Year Old Grenache McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2019 Trophy: Best Small Batch Wine McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2019 Gold Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2019 Gold Medal Six Nations Wine Challenge, 2019 95pts James Halliday 96pts Sarah Ahmed 95pts James Suckling 95pts Huon Hooke Impressive stuff. 93+pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front 92pts The Wine Advocate</p>



THISTLEDOWN



2017

Silver Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2018

Silver Medal James Halliday Grenache Challenge, 2018

96pts James Halliday

94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front



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SHE'S ELECTRIC GRENACHE

2023

95pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate
95pts JamesSuckling.com
95pts The Real Review
94pts The Wine Front

2022

96pts The Real Review
96pts Decanter
95pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate
94pts Halliday Wine Companion
93pts The Wine Front

2021

96pts & SPECIAL VALUE Halliday Wine Companion
95pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate
95pts Wine Enthusiast
95pts JamesSuckling.com
95pts The Wine Front
95pts The Real Review
93pts The Vintage Journal

2020

96pts JamesSuckling.com
95pts Halliday
93pts The Wine Front
92pts Vinous

2019

96pts JamesSuckling.com
96pts Halliday
95pts The Wine Front
92pts Huon Hooke
16.5pts Jancis Robinson
93pts Wines & Spirits Magazine
92pts Wine Advocate

2018

96pts & Great Value Halliday
94pts Decanter Magazine
93+pts The Wine Front
93pts James Suckling
91pts The Wine Advocate

2023

95pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)

The 2023 She's Electric Old Vine Single Vineyard Grenache was handpicked, whole-bunch pressed and fermented wild with 50% whole bunches, then matured for 10 months in older French oak. The palate is complex and complete, with a ductile framework of tannin and lashings of exotic spice, raspberry compote, licorice and black tea. This is a superb wine; it's rich and big but so balanced. There is energy here, edgy, vibrant energy.

95pts Ned Goodwin MW, JamesSuckling.com

This grenache shows glorious riffs on tangerines, mandarin peel, kirsch, cranberries, cloves and mace with a succulent mouth-feel. Full, but feels more medium-bodied. Scintillating length with a briary, chewy edge. Wonderful drinking. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

95pts Aaron Brasher, The Real Review

In this gorgeously fragrant and dramatic grenache, they have absolutely captured the essence of old vine McLaren Vale grenache. Lovely vibrancy of colour in the glass. The aromas are alluring and complex. There's plenty of dried flowers, herbs, red and blue fruits and a sarsaparilla lift. The flavours are vivid and multi-faceted, all red fruits, spice and a creamy, textured mouth-feel. The tannins have a suppleness, yet real presence and the acidity delivers snap and crackle. Delicious gear.

94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Seaview Grenache. 50% whole bunch. 2023 was a cool and late vintage. Strawberry, raspberry, spice, thyme, mint, Earl Grey tea, a Campari-like top note. It's medium-bodied, spicy with cherry and blood orange, fine white pepper dusted tannin, and some of



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	<p>that in the flavour department too, kind of bony, but juicy with strawberries too. Finish is powdery and long. Very good.</p>
2022	<p>96pts The Real Review (Huon Hooke) Deep, bright purple-red colour; a gently scented bouquet of raspberry and blackcurrant pastilles, fringed with subtle spices. The wine is full bodied and there are ample fine-grained tannins that impart pleasing structure and contribute to its length. A very smart grenache that will age well but can also be enjoyed young.</p> <p>96pts Decanter (David Sly) Intensity from old-vine fruit meshes with a hum of acidity. Lifted aromas of musk and Turkish delight lead to flavours of wild strawberry, amplified by 50% whole bunches. Comforting for its plush mouthfeel and challenging for its sharp fruit tang, spiky minerality and spice.</p> <p>95pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin) The 2022 She's Electric Old Vine Single Vineyard Grenache features 50% whole bunches in the wild ferment, but it doesn't smell or feel more bunchy than the others, showing a sensitive approach to winemaking suited to individually fit the vineyard sites. Cool. On the nose, there is Valencia orange, raspberry coulis, cumin seeds, saffron, licorice and wet asphalt/ozone. This is gritty and savory in the mouth, more earthy than some of the others, but I do love that about it—it gives some savory yin to the sweet yang. The wine lingers in a lavender/ylang yang way, floral and petal-y. Lovely plus.</p> <p>94pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) Dry-grown old bush vines. The norm. This time, in Seaview. Lower elevation. Reddish sandy loams littered with quartz and ironstone. This has greater concentration than the Vagabond grenache, yet without quite the detail or saveur. Damson plum and marasca cherry. Anise, thyme, menthol and lavender. A tad drying. A delicious wine of an expansive mid-palate, intensity of fruit and prodigious length, yet without the translucent pinosity and levity despite the alcohol and oomph that marks the very best examples of grenache from the Vale.</p> <p>93pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Rich, ironstone/ferrous thing, raspberry, cherry, hazelnut and carob, lots of flesh and tannin, fruit is more on the down low, maybe a little lacking in the mid-palate, but the earthy/choc/ferrous things are the main driver here. Still, distinctive and very good.</p>
2021	<p>96pts & SPECIAL VALUE Ned Goodwin, Halliday Wine Companion The Vagabond is superlative, but this is extraordinary! The tannins, taut, febrile and wound across a spool of sage, thyme and blood orange zest. The drive of red cherry, rhubarb and Mediterranean herb is palate staining, without ever renegeing on its sandy, vibrant and effortless hand. Incredibly complex. Scintillating length. Kerpow!</p> <p>95pts Erin Larkin, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate The 2021 She's Electric Old Vine Single Vineyard Grenache is like silken tofu in the mouth: it's all about velvety texture, except here, the fruit is punctuated and supported by both very fine tannins and tense acid. This is a very smart wine, exciting, with notes of blood, raspberry pip, pink peppercorn and red licorice. It has a texturally creamy undertow, and the tannins are powdery and smashed into the fruit. Awesome.</p> <p>95pts JamesSuckling.com A complex nose of blueberry, raspberry, red cherry, violet, bark, moss and grated nutmeg. Medium- to full-bodied with silky, fruit-soaked tannins. Generous, but not overdone. Rather, it is fresh, bright and vibrant, with a bevy of succulent fruit and ground spice. Layered, with great balance. Vegan. Best after 2025. Screw cap.</p> <p>95pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Dark raspberry, sage and thyme, spice and dried roses. Medium-bodied, ripe raspberry, silky and sooty tannin, perfume of bergamot and gentle twist of amaro, a sort of stony/earthy character, almond and fine grip on a long and fragrant red berry finish. Beautiful wine. And it needs more time.</p> <p>95pts The Real Review (Huon Hooke)</p>



THISTLEDOWN



	<p>Medium to deep red colour with a good tint of purple. The bouquet shows iodine, balsamic herbs possibly signalling some whole-bunch activity. It's full-bodied and rich in the mouth, the generous flavour backed judiciously by abundant tannins, nice and ripe. Luscious stuff—but also has a little more structure than The Vagabond. (50% whole bunches)</p> <p>93pts The Vintage Journal (Andrew Caillard MW)</p> <p>Medium deep colour. Vibrant raspberry, musky plum aromas with chinotto notes. Supple and smooth with beautifully concentrated juicy raspberry, plum fruits, some cola notes, fine lacy textures and fresh linear acidity. Finishes crunchy and long. Delicious early drinking style.</p>
2020	<p>96pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p>Has a bunchy, deeply complex nose with fruit sitting in the red and blueberry spectrum. Some frisky, ferment, meat and wild herb, too. Plenty of structure and tannin with good depth of summer-berry flavor. Sturdy. Drink over the next six years.</p> <p>95pts Ned Goodwin, Halliday Wine Companion</p> <p>93pts The Real Review (Stuart Knox)</p> <p>92pts Vinous (Josh Reynolds)</p>
2019	<p>96pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p>96pts & Great Value Award, Halliday Wine Companion 2021</p> <p>This set of wines is so on the pulse! I am astounded, smitten and swooning, all at once.</p> <p>95pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front</p> <p>92pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review</p> <p>16.5pts Jancis Robinson</p> <p>91pts Wines & Spirits Magazine</p> <p>92pts Wine Advocate</p>
2018	<p>Silver Medal Barossa Valley Wine Show 2019</p> <p>96pts & Great Value James Halliday</p> <p>94pts Decanter Magazine</p> <p>93+ pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front</p> <p>93pts James Suckling</p> <p>91pts The Wine Advocate</p>
2017	<p>Gold Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2018</p> <p>Gold Medal James Halliday Grenache Challenge, 2018</p> <p>95pts James Halliday</p>



THISTLEDOWN



SANDS OF TIME GRENACHE

2023

97pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate
95pts JamesSuckling.com
94pts The Wine Front

2022

GOLD McLaren Vale Wine Show
96+pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate
96pts Halliday Wine Companion
96pts Decanter
96pts JamesSuckling.com
96pts The Wine Front
95pts The Real Review

2021

97+pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate
97pts & SPECIAL VALUE Halliday Wine Companion
TOP TEN Grenache Halliday Wine Companion
96pts The Vintage Journal
95pts JamesSuckling.com **#58 TOP 100 2023**
95pts The Wine Front
95pts & TOP RANK The Real Review

2020

TROPHY Global Fine Wine Challenge 2021
97 pts (Editor's Choice) Wine Enthusiast
96 pts Halliday Wine Companion
96pts The Real Review
96pts JamesSuckling.com **#14 TOP 100 2023**
95+pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate
95+pts The Wine Front
94pts Vinous
17.5/20 pts JancisRobinson.com

2019

Best Grenache (97pts) Halliday
96pts WBM
96pts The Real Review
95+pts The Wine Front
95pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate
95pts JamesSuckling.com
95pts Gourmet Traveller Wine
17pts Jancis Robinson
93pts Wines & Spirits Magazine
95pts 24 Vinous Highlights of 2020

2018

Winner, Top Gold, 97 Points
 James Halliday Grenache Challenge 2019
Gold McLaren Vale Wine Show 2019
96pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate
96pts Sarah Ahmed
95pts James Halliday
95pts The Wine Front
94pts Huon Hooke
94pts James Suckling
93pts The Wine Advocate

2017

Top 10 Australian Wines,
 Matthew Jukes
Silver McLaren Vale Wine Show 2018
Silver Halliday Grenache Challenge 2018
96pts Halliday
96pts The Wine Front
94pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate
93pts Huon Hooke

2023

97 points – Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)

The 2023 Sands of Time Old Vine Single Vineyard Grenache leads with a floral, fragrant bouquet of Boscobel rose, crushed green (and salted) pistachios, licorice, clove, star anise and cracked fennel seeds. The wine is structurally fine and ductile; the tannins present us with an attractive framework of support and texture. It is gently chewy, layered with tobacco, iron and a hint of boudin noir, or black pudding. (I was recently pulled away from my Northern English roots while in France. We had boudin noir, and it was significantly silkier, fattier, softer and more lustrous than the English version; and to my palate at least, it was far more aligned with wine and nuance.) Suffice to say, this is a super wine, fragrant and detailed, long and complex. Yes!



THISTLEDOWN



	<p>95 points – JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW) There are very few wines that I look forward to more than the top duo of grenache from Thistledown, be it on Australian or international shores. This, from an octogenarian spread of vines, higher up on meager sands flecked with ironstone, peering toward the vast Pacific horizon. The final vintage of a La Nina troika, splaying red-fruit allusions, dried thyme, rose petal, pomegranate and lilac, with a mandala of gritty nigh-on nebbiolo-esque tannins, directing and driving long. The tannins are just a little emaciated, to be churlish. Later-ripening varieties, such as grenache, had their challenges in this vintage, yet this gorgeous rendition virtually transcends them.</p> <p>94 points – The Wine Front (Mike Bennie) Concentrated but quite fine in the palate, lacy and pure-feeling with a mix of sweet spice, headier almost curry spice, curiously, blood orange, and lots of cherry between just-ripe and maraschino. Slender swish of fine boned tannins, minerally and crushed rock qualities. Great extension of flavour too. Massive charm here.</p>
2022	<p>GOLD McLaren Vale Wine Show</p> <p>96+ points – Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin) The 2022 Sands of Time Old Vine Single Vineyard Grenache was one of the loveliest Grenaches that I tasted from McLaren Vale last year, and it again presents with a hedonistic display of sweet ripe fruit, supple blood orange inflections on the tannic structure and layer upon layer of flavor and texture. All of the components are enmeshed and present as one. The tannins are again my favorite part of this picture: sandy (Blewitt Springs), pluming, uber-fine and absolutely ever present. This is a big wine but so detailed.</p> <p>96 points – Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)</p> <p>96 points – JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW) This is attractive. Lifted and fresh and laden with sweet, succulent red fruits, tangerine zest, musk, kirsch, rosewater and lilac. Blewitt over the Charming Man from Clarendon. This is brighter, floral, earthier and sweeter; the Clarendon is tighter, more textural, airier and considerably more savoury. Clarendon wins, but it is not always the case. This is still a brilliant, flamboyant grenache, if not a little sweet across the diaphanous tannic seams. It is a treat to witness the rise of grenache, the flag bearer of the most exciting chapter of Australian wine to date.</p> <p>96 points – Decanter (David Sly) Sourced from Sue Trott's coveted home block, this shows a generous dark spectrum of fruit and a sharp acid bite that drives the mid-palate, with a fine minerality and texture that sculpts a very elegant finish. Boasts a stately, unforced complexity.</p> <p>96 points Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Blewitt Springs. A single vineyard with vines 75 years old. Exotic, so much perfume of flowering herbs, aniseed, chocolate, dark raspberry and cherry. Muscular style, purple and ripe red fruits, lots of spice, layers of graphite tannin grip, all blue and spicy on a very long and firm finish. Quite something.</p> <p>95 points Huon Hooke, The Real Review Deep-ish red-purple colour; spicy red fruits/raspberry aromas, dried blood/ferrous nuances too, the palate very savoury with ample tannins and good structure. A fruit-driven wine that will no doubt develop tertiary complexities with a little time. Really tasty grenache that shows 2022 is not to be overshadowed by '21.</p>
2021	<p>97+ points Erin Larkin, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate Hooley dooley. Good. This 2021 Sands of Time Old Vine Single Vineyard Grenache shows Grenache in its best light; when the fruit is buoyant, succulent, airy and spicy, but also when it has been compressed and screwed down into place by gossamer fine tannins. This is tight yet expansive, classy yet exciting: a wine of amalgums and complexity. So what does it taste like? First, raspberry leaf tea, red licorice, berry coulis... then blood, ferrous and iodine seep into the edges and drag with them licorice, pink peppercorn, hung deli meat and a whiff of blackberry pie. It finishes slender, with graphite and quartz. The cooler year has exposed a</p>



THISTLEDOWN



fine framework of ripe, whippy tannins, which hold the fruit in place—ever-present yet invisible. What a wine.

97 points & SPECIAL VALUE Ned Goodwin MW, Halliday Wine Companion

'Raspberry, lilac and rosehip behind. The tannins, a saline scape of bridling force that stretch from the attack to the long, chalky finish. Delicious. Concrete ferment, layered bunches and destemmed material to promote perfume and a mezcal whiff of the best parts beyond a border of control. Saliva-sapping energy.'

96 points Andrew Caillard MW, The Vintage Journal

Medium deep crimson. Lovely dark plum, raspberry aromas with graphite, aniseed notes. Inky deep dark plum, raspberry, strawberry pastille flavours, fine loose knit vigorous/chalky textures, pinot-noir-esque viscosity and superb quartz-like acidity. Finishes crunchy/minerally with pure red and dark fruits. Superb density, vigour and presence.

95 points Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Raspberry, rosehip, a gently saline and earthy character. Deep flavour, firm slightly sandy feel to tannin, though tight, plenty of tannin and crunch to a long finish. So good.

95 points & TOP RANK Aaron Brasher, The Real Review

Really bright and vibrant in the glass. Evocative aromas of dried flowers, raspberry, cherry, sweet spice and cedar. Mid-weight on the palate, there's a lovely fleshy juiciness, plenty of red and blue fruits and chalky, textured and mouthfilling tannins. Plenty of complexity and layers of flavour here.

Thistledown is a champion of McLaren Vale grenache and this wine is right up there in the upper echelons of quality. Really bright and vibrant in the glass. Evocative aromas of dried flowers, raspberry, cherry, sweet spice and cedar. Mid-weight on the palate, there's a lovely fleshy juiciness, plenty of red and blue fruits and chalky, textured and mouth filling tannins. Plenty of complexity and layers of flavour here.

95 points JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW) #58 TOP 100 2023

A vintage that will go down in history as among the very best of all time, although it was a bit easy for grenache, according to maker Giles Cooke MW. There wasn't enough of a struggle, given that grenache likes a nudge of adversity. Scintillating complexity here, all the same. Scents of tea tree, black olive, dried scrub, bergamot, licorice root, kirsch and thyme. An edgy wine. Angular shape-shifting tannins, not yet resolved. Mid-weighted of feel. Shins and elbows, trying to sort itself out amidst the pangs of youth. It will. It just needs time. Best after 2025.

2020

TROPHY Global Fine Wine Challenge 2021

96 points Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

Sourced from the old, sandy Blewitt Springs Home Block of Sue Trott. Fermented wild, with attenuated maceration in eggs and the inclusion of 30% whole bunches imparting turmeric, sandalwood, cardamon scents and finely wrought, granular tannins akin to nebbiolo. Real pinosity and sap to this. Succulent notes of kirsch, fecund strawberry and anise. A parry of tension and thrust of gentle sweetness. Remarkable freshness. A wine that places domestic grenache among the world's best.

96 points - The Real Review (Huon Hooke)

Deep, bright purple/red colour. Aromas of spices, graphite and ironstone, plus chocolate. Medium to full-bodied, with sumptuous flavour. Delicious wine. (Trophy, New World Wine Challenge 2021)

96 points - JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW) #14 TOP 100 2023

A very warm vintage with paucity of moisture in the soils. Yet grenache likes adversity, eking its survival from the deep root systems of old vines, like those on show here. Vinous and forceful. Beef-bouillon, lilac, tamarind, rose-water and pungent mineral succulence, like sucking on a river stone. A vibrato of tension, drawing excellent length across a bow of sandy, tetchy tannins. Excellent. Drink or hold.

95+ points Erin Larkin, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate



THISTLEDOWN



	<p>This 2020 Sands of Time Old Vine Single Vineyard Grenache is powdery and supple. It's chalky and plumes in the mouth, with notes of savory iodine and salted berries. Jasmine tea, kelp, pink grapefruit and blood orange... there's a lot going on here. Sensational.</p> <p>95+ points Gary Walsh, The Wine Front</p> <p>Very old vines in Blewitt Springs. Cherry, sage and dried roses, spicy biscuits, with a subtle earthy character. Ripe, intense red fruit and cherry flavour, sprinkled with dried herbs, almost gravelly tannin, fresh acidity, a fair amount of mouth-perfume, and a spicy poached strawberry finish of excellent length. Outstanding.</p> <p>94pts Vinous (Josh Reynolds) 17.5/20 points JancisRobinson.com</p>
2019	<p>BEST VARIETAL GRENACHE - 97pts Halliday Wine Companion</p> <p>Among the finest reds in Australia. Ethereal and transparent. A blessed Australian site and an uncanny semblance to Rayas.</p> <p>96pts Tyson Stelzer, Wine Business Magazine (WBM) Crafted and classy.</p> <p>96pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review</p> <p>95+pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front</p> <p>95pts Erin Larkin, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate</p> <p>95pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p>95pts Gourmet Traveller Wine</p> <p>93pts Wines & Spirits Magazine</p> <p>95pts 24 Vinous Highlights of 2020 (Josh Reynolds) 17/20pts Jancis Robinson</p>
2018	<p>Winner, Top Gold, 97 Points James Halliday Grenache Challenge 2019</p> <p>Gold Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show 2019</p> <p>96pts Erin Larkin, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate</p> <p>95pts James Halliday Wine Companion 2021</p> <p>96pts Sarah Ahmed, Decanter</p> <p>95+pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front</p> <p>94pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review</p> <p>94pts James Suckling</p> <p>93pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate</p> <p>Top Wine Feature - Max Allen, Australian Financial Review</p>
2017	<p>Top 100 Australian Wines 2019, Matthew Jukes</p> <p>Silver Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2018</p> <p>Silver Medal James Halliday Grenache Challenge, 2018</p> <p>96pts James Halliday</p> <p>96pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front</p> <p>94pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate</p> <p>93pts Huon Hooke</p>





THIS CHARMING MAN GRENACHE

2023

96pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate
96pts JamesSuckling.com
94pts The Wine Front

2022

GOLD McLaren Vale Wine Show
97pts Halliday Wine Companion
97pts Decanter
96pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate
97pts JamesSuckling.com
95+pts The Wine Front
95pts The Real Review

2021

97pts JamesSuckling.com **#3 TOP 100 2023**
96+pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate
96pts The Wine Front
95pts Halliday Wine Companion
95pts The Vintage Journal (Andrew Caillard MW)
95pts The Real Review

2020

97pts JamesSuckling.com (TOP 100 Australian Wines of 2021)
95pts Wine Enthusiast
95pts Halliday Wine Companion
95pts The Wine Front
95pts The Real Review
94pts Vinous

2019

97pts JamesSuckling.com
96pts Halliday Wine Companion
96pts The Real Review
95pts The Wine Front
94pts Halliday Wine Companion
93pts Gourmet Traveller Wine
17.5 pts Jancis Robinson MW
91pts Wine Advocate

2018

Gold Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2019
95pts Sarah Ahmed, Decanter
95pts The Real Review
94pts James Suckling
94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front
92pts The Wine Advocate

2023

96pts – Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)

The 2023 The Charming Man Single Vineyard Grenache is altogether moodier and darker than the Sands of Time tasted alongside it, but that is not making a comment on "weight" or "density" but rather on character. Here, we have blackberry and mulberry, raspberry pip and star anise, layers of coal dust, dirt and graphite, clove and even nutmeg/cinnamon. The tannins are über fine, chalky, grippy and gently chewy. It is a wonderful thing to experience the "feel" of the wine as much as the taste. Interacting with red wine in this way—and white as well—makes for thrilling drinking. It curls and winds its way through the long finish. It's super. A pleasure.

96pts – JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

It is inescapable, the need to compare the iconic grenache cuvees from this producer. Each superlative, vying for top position with the other each year, the seeding oscillating with vintage vagaries and mood. This is a richer geological mold, more ferrous of make up, resulting in a more ferruginous wine. Still, it's mid-weighted of feel, due to the inherent freshness and bulletproof tannin profile, rocky and sublime. Thyme, dried lavender, kirsch, cardamon, tamarind and rose water. Exotic and resinous. Not the balletic pirouette of fragrance-meets-freshness of its sibling, necessarily. Yet, there's more grunt, a little more extract, longer-limbed tannins and so much to believe in. Put this away for six-years and see what happens. I hedge towards magic, once the force-field of tannins settles.

THISTLEDOWN



	<p>94pts – The Wine Front (Mike Bennie) Good perfume here. Rose hip tea, ginger biscuits, wild raspberry, a swathe of wild, green herbs and a touch of alpine herbal lift. The palate is firm and fine, grippy, granular, tightly wound and somewhat crisp. More cherry to taste, slightly amaro-like with a crunch of blood orange, more of the ginger biscuit thing going on with excellent persistence of quality tannin and some sweet spice meshed to alpine herb lift. Very fine boned, shimmers across the palate. Refreshing almost. Should mature well too.</p>
2022	<p>GOLD McLaren Vale Wine Show 97pts – Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) 97pts – JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW) #3 TOP 100 2023 The qualitative apogee when it comes to grenache, rivalled by few and equalled only by Yangarra. Even better than the superb 2021. Sourced from the highest, coolest site in the Vale, the venerable Smart vineyard. Ironstone imparts a ferrous bite to pithy sour cherry, cranberry, campfire, pomegranate, tamarind and sandalwood notes with a grind of white pepper across a lattice of pin bone tannins, curtailing sweetness while promoting stunning length. This is excellent. Superb! Transparent and brimming with a sense of pinoté, like a mini Rayas. A great wine of the present as much as the future. Among Australia's very greatest reds. I don't score above 97, but this could be worth a point higher.</p> <p>97pts – Decanter (David Sly) One of several small-batch Grenaches sourced from the Smart vineyard, this nimble-bodied wine changes gears dramatically, from light-fruited seduction to a dark-fruited wrestle. Its stern acid spine keeps tingling throughout, along with fine tea tannins.</p> <p>96pts – Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin) The 2022 The Charming Man Single Vineyard Grenache hails from a single vineyard in Clarendon, named after Bernard Smart. I haven't met a producer in McLaren Vale yet that doesn't light up at the mention of this man and his vineyard. So, to the wine. It offers blood orange, rosemary, a hint of sage, fresh blood, layers of raspberry pip, a hint of star anise and loads of ground exotic five spice. This is supple and flowing in the mouth, with the 20% whole-bunch inclusion a suggestion of complexity and not an overwhelming quality. All of the components are in balance and harmony: it has no more fruit than tannin, no more flavor than freshness, no more complexity than vivacity.</p> <p>95+pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Clarendon. Some vines up to 100 years of age. Black and red fruits, baking spice, floral too, with some thyme and cocoa. It's lively, quite stony in feel, a lovely crunch and freshness to acidity, quite concentrated but still light on its feet. The finish pulls more to spiced strawberry and raspberry, with flowering herb perfume on a very long finish. Delightful.</p> <p>95pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review Medium-deep red-purple colour, with sarsaparilla and spice aromas of clove, pepper and nutmeg, the palate medium-bodied and smooth textured with ample fine-grained tannins and serious structure. Taut and coiled. A grenache of high potential.</p>
2021	<p>97pts JamesSuckling.com I have tasted this producer's wines for a time now and adore the grenaches. Often my preference is for the Sands of Time cuvée but in 2021, a vintage of such effortless quality, This Charming Man ascends. Bitter red-fruit, orange-pastille, tea-tree, dried-thyme, bracken and sandalwood riffs are beautifully compressed by a phalanx of brushwood tannins. Mid-weighted Nebbiolo vibes. Very fine. Extremely long. An exquisite grenache.</p> <p>96+pts Erin Larkin, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate This wine is named after Bernard Smart, who owns the Smart vineyard in Clarendon. This 2021 The Charming Man Single Vineyard Grenache is more savory and fine-boned than the Sands of Time; there's rose petal fruit and raspberry pip and iodine, kelp and graphite. There's a bloody character here. I love it. It's savory, supple, whippy, pliable, mouth perfume.</p> <p>96pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front</p>



THISTLEDOWN



	<p>Floral and perfumed, spicy biscuit, red fruit. Very fine and fresh, a cranberry flavour and dryness to acidity, distinct 'mineral' feel, firm emery tannin, boysenberry and red fruits, and a little pepper on a long bright finish. Lovely. So lacy and delicate. It's somewhere between 95 and 96 points, but as I'm keen on a Grenache that's light and frisky, I've gone towards the latter score.</p> <p>95 points – Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) Pickled cherry, ume, lavender, rhubarb and poached plum. A waft of menthol, too, but nothing intrusive. The Smart vineyard is high and cool. Characterful, while pushing the svelte tannic line of grit and paradoxical elegance that mark the region's finest wines. All, let's face it, grenache. This is stellar. It grows in stature as it unravels and beams clove, white pepper and violet across a brilliant finish of real pizzazz.</p> <p>95 points – The Vintage Journal (Andrew Caillard MW) Medium deep crimson. Fresh and intense strawberry, red cherry, red liquorice aromas. Generously flavoured wine with ample strawberry, red cherry, redcurrant fruits, brambly/grippy textures, some earthy notes and fresh, long, high-pitched acidity. Very individual but very good energy and impact. Probably needs some more time to settle down, but the elements are all in balance.</p> <p>95 points – The Real Review (Aaron Brasher) Youthful and bright red in the glass. Complex aromas of dark cherry, blueberry, menthol, dried herbs, spice and limestone. Bright, textured, layered and mouthfilling. Complex and driven by fleshy cherry, raspberry, sweet spice and zingy acidity. Lovely weight and presence, long and very satisfying.</p>
2020	<p>97pts JamesSuckling.com (Nick Stock) This is grenache with real purity and focus, offering fragrant raspberry, wild-herb and sappy nuances on the nose. The palate strikes elegance with concentration and delivers such pure raspberry and red-plum flavors. The acidity chimes in neatly. This is just so polished. Drink over the next seven years.</p> <p>95pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) When siphoning amidst the pantheon of the country's greatest grenache it is important to take time to let wines unwind. And so it is that I write on the 2nd day after opening. Was clunky. Now, a swan! From the cherished Smart Family vineyard. Cherry amaro, bergamot, thyme, lavender and a whiff of mint, rather than (mercifully) eucalyptus. Some malty oak could be shifted. Sweeter than the '19 with a skein of freshness and bunchy (20%) tannins tucking in the exuberance. Expansive. The broader of the siblings. Long and juicy. Delicious.</p> <p>95pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front From the Smart vineyard, up in Clarendon. Interesting to note how much lighter the colour is than the Sands of Time Blewitt Springs Grenache. Raspberry, dried flowers and mint, pretty and spicy. Medium-bodied, juicy red fruits with spicy biscuit flavour, fine grained tightly knit tannin, strawberry and sweet dried herbs on a long fine fresh finish. Stylish. Needs a few years, but so fine and good.</p> <p>95pts The Real Review (Stuart Knox) The palate has a medium-weight with a narrow flavour line that is laser-like in its focus. The tannins and acidity drive it to the finish. Time will allow further complexities and textures to build, but still a great drink right now.</p> <p>94pts Vinous (Josh Reynolds)</p>
2019	<p>97pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com 96pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW), 10 GREAT REDS 96pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review 17.5 pts/20 Jancis Robinson MW 95pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Fine wine, no doubt. 94pts Halliday Wine Companion 2021 93pts Gourmet Traveller Wine</p>



THISTLEDOWN



	91pts Wine Advocate
2018	Gold Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2019 95pts Sarah Ahmed, Decanter 95pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review 94pts James Suckling 94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front 92pts The Wine Advocate



THISTLEDOWN



FOOL ON THE HILL GRENACHE

2022

96pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate
93pts Halliday Wine Companion
93pts JamesSuckling.com

2021

95pts Robert Parker's Wine Advocate
95pts JamesSuckling.com
95pts The Wine Front
93pts The Vintage Journal

2022

96 points – Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)

The fruit for this 2022 Fool on the Hill Grenache hails from the Mattschoss vineyard in Eden Valley, and the wine veritably explodes with crushed rocks, black earth, clove and dried star anise, raspberry leaf tea and dehydrated orange peel. This comes alive in the mouth, where it is savory but spicy, totally New World and a little bit febrile, all the while pushing this forge of raspberry-inflected flavor across the tongue and through to the finish. This is a ripping wine, left of center, super, precise, a bit gritty, awesome. it is really contained in its shape.

93 points – Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

93 points – JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

Seldom does grenache from Barossa or Eden Valley equal that of the Vale. This is good, but darker of exposure than the luminosity of expressions closer to the coast. But it is still grenache, the finest red cultivar for the majority of Australian conditions by a country mile. Transcendental moments are inevitable, thus. Brambly forest berries, mint, amaro and anise. A swathe of eucalyptus dries the tannins, but there is plenty of push to the extract and underlying freshness for poise and drinkability.

2021

95 points – Robert Parker's Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)

The Mattschoss vineyard, where fruit this 2021 Fool on the Hill Grenache, Eden Valley is sourced, is high up in the Eden Valley where the old bush vines really struggle in their quest for productive survival. The wine itself is supple and imbued with smithereen tannins: fine, chalky and omnipresent. This has all the slink and shape you could want from Grenache but harnessed. Thistledown is part of the new breed of the very best Grenache producers in the country. The tannins are screwed down into the buoyant fruit, providing balance, grounding and harmony. You can probably tell from this note that I love this wine; the tannins are the highlight.

95 points – JamesSuckling.com

Aromas of white pepper, rose hip, strawberry, baked cherry, rosemary and thyme. Full-bodied with fine, chewy tannins. Bright and vibrant on the palate, with juicy fruit and spice. Succulent. Clear, transparent and fresh. Lovely tension here, which will unravel with time. A pleasure.

95 points - The Wine Front (Gary Walsh)

Dark cherry, plenty of sweet spice, a little earthy/stony, liquorice, dried flowers and sage. It's firm, plenty of ripe cherry and raspberry flavour, bounteous gravelly tannin, dry but plump, with a very long savoury finish. Terrific.

93 points - The Vintage Journal (Andrew Caillard MW)

Medium deep crimson. Intense dark cherry, dark plum aromas with graphite, petrichor notes. Well concentrated dark cherry, plum fruits, chewy textures, attractive mid-palate viscosity, persistent crunchy acidity. Sturdy and slurpy with very good density and backbone.



THISTLEDOWN



GORGEOUS SHIRAZ

2022

90pts Halliday Wine Companion
90pts JamesSuckling.com
90pts The Real Review

2021

92pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate
Wine of the Week – Money Week
92pts The Real Review
90pts Halliday Wine Companion

2022

90 points – Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

90 points – JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

All Riverland fruit, with a heritage property supplying the shiraz. A dollop of old-vine zibibbo and a smidgeon of fiano were co-fermented, serving lift and perfume. This has some throaty warmth to it, yet the extraction regime was clearly whole-berry gentle, so easy is this to drink. Mindless, in the very best way. It avoids the bane of excessive reduction, ploughing cinnamon stick, clove, cardamon, bergamot and Bing cherry lines across a drift of gentle tannic grip. Chilling this is imperative.

90 points – The Real Review (Stuart Knox)

Bright ruby with a vibrant purple tone into the rim. Ultra fragrant with bright red and blue fruit, violets and liquorice all leaping from the glass. Slippery and gliding as it flows across the tongue with ample plump purple fruits and subtle dark spices along the journey. Tannins are silky and just caress the edges to a good length finish. A delicious drink now style.

2021

92 points – Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)

How utterly gorgeous. Aptly named.

WINE OF THE WEEK – Money Week (Matthew Jukes)

The shiraz or syrah grape variety is equally at home flying solo or being used as a component in a blend. It dominates the partnership in this thrilling wine by taking up 86% of the bottle, and the remaining proportion is a rather unlikely 14% zibibbo, or muscat. It occurs to me that the name Gorgeous is entirely apt here. This is a wine that majors on fresh berry fruit notes drawn from a single vineyard of old-vine shiraz while the zibibbo adds lustre and gloss, a little like those wines that employ viognier to do a similar, but perhaps more perfumed, task. With only 13.5% alcohol on board, there is a freshness here, too, that lifts the finish and completes the picture.

92 points - The Real Review (Aaron Brasher)

Youthful and bright in the glass. Lifted aromas of pot-pourri, blueberry, bay leaf, Campari, cola, menthol and spice. Lively and juicy on the palate, blueberry, satsuma plum, sarsaparilla and a woody, cedary line. The tannins are soft and round and the acidity gives firmness and shapes the wine nicely.

90 points – Ned Goodwin MW, Halliday Wine Companion

A pulpy and reductively handled, fuller than mid-weighted, easygoing, warm-climate Australian shiraz, with a swirl of whole-berry bubblegum, purple and blue fruits, licorice straps, nori and smoked meat riffs, with plenty of sap. The vibrant florals impart life, rather than any bright acidity per se. I'd drink this on the cooler side.



THISTLEDOWN



THE CUNNING PLAN SHIRAZ

2022

BEST SHIRAZ McLaren Vale Wine Show

BEST YOUNG SHIRAZ McLaren Vale Wine Show

95pts Wine Companion

92pts JamesSuckling.com

91pts The Real Review

GOLD MEDAL Texsom

2021

93pts Halliday Wine Companion

92pts The Wine Front

92pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate

92pts JamesSuckling.com

91pts Wine Enthusiast

90pts The Real Review

2020

93pts (4 stars) GT Wine

92pts The Wine Front

92pts JamesSuckling.com

91pts Vinous

90pts The Real Review

17/20pts JancisRobinson.com

2019

TOP 100 (96pts) James Halliday

93pts JamesSuckling.com

92pts The Wine Front

BRONZE MEDAL Royal Adelaide Wine Show 2020

SILVER McLaren Vale Wine Show 2020

90pts Wine Spectator

92pts James Suckling

91pts The Wine Front

90pts Huon Hooke

90pts The Wine Advocate

2018

92pts James Suckling

91pts The Wine Front

90pts Huon Hooke

90pts The Wine Advocate

2016

94pts Halliday

90pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review

2022

BEST SHIRAZ McLaren Vale Wine Show

BEST YOUNG SHIRAZ McLaren Vale Wine Show

95pts Halliday Wine Companion (Marcus Ellis)

Whole berry, four-day soak, wild ferment, 10% new French oak, the remainder seasoned French. In value terms, this is truly exceptional. It's a wine of poise and engaging vibrancy that's also rippling with flavour. Raspberry, blackberry, ripe redcurrant and red plum are all suggested but never so defined that they simplify. A dusting of warm spices and a lilt of red florals deepen the interest as well as the ready appeal. The finish underlines the class, with a lithe, effortless balance that leaves perfectly ripe flavours lingering, along with the desire for another glass.

92pts JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

A powerful, typically regional shiraz, exuding baking spice, clove, Bing cherry and five-spice. Soft and plush, with the caveat of some tangy acidity marking the forceful back end.



THISTLEDOWN



	<p>91pts The Real Review (Huon Hooke) Deep, dark, rich red-purple colour; very rich chocolate and black fruit aromas, tinged with tar and graphite. There are savoury, almost bitter tannins on the palate and it has a pleasantly earthy/mineral nature, as opposed to fruity. Fleshy and supple, with a good long carry.</p>
2021	<p>93pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin) The poise immaculate, attesting to the quality of 2021. Suave, fresh and floral. Blue fruits, a riff on dried seaweed with a sluice of white-pepper-doused freshness towing fine length. A lip-smacking drink, uncannily reminiscent of top cru beaujolais, so mellifluous the feel.</p> <p>92pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Plum, raspberry, mint, and brown spices. It's just over medium-bodied, a little saline and minty, but juicy too, with supple tannin, sage and woody spice, finishes quite salty and spicy, with good length. Kind of wheaty too, and slightly warm. Good though. Very sub-regional, as it were.</p> <p>92pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin) After tasting fifty or so big, extracted, heavily oaked Shiraz, this 2021 Cunning Plan Shiraz is like a breath of fresh air. It's mineral, bloody, midweight and spicy, with a skein of fine saline acid that curls through the palate. The red fruit is the very definition of buoyant, and it brings a plume of brine, iodine and ferrous to the fore. It's very good and gets an "A" for style. And it's classily handled.</p> <p>92pts JamesSuckling.com Aromas of spiced plum, red cherry, thyme and rose. Full-bodied with gentle tannins. Enveloping and even on the palate, with steady intensity and a seamless texture. Black-fruited and well-concentrated, with a subtle, spicy finish.</p> <p>90pts Stuart Knox, The Wine Front Rich ruby red throughout the glass. Nose lifts with blueberry and pencil graphite. Full weight of fresh blue fruits, still quite primary but there's a note of spice lingering underneath. Tannins are velvety and fine but carry enough tension to drive the flow long. Time should see more savoury character develop.</p>
2020	<p>93pts (4 stars) Nick Stock, Gourmet Traveller Wine An intense yet approachable shiraz that sits in the red plum fruit zone on the nose and palate. The plush texture and deeply intense tannins are really striking here. There's an effortlessness about this wine that really strikes a chord, exactly what McLaren Vale does so well.</p> <p>92pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Sourced from a vineyard in McLaren Flat. 15% new oak. No black adders included in the crush. Blackberry, plum, dark chocolate, a little vanilla and spice, attractive floral and slightly minty perfume here too. It's fleshy, all the chocolate dipped plums, a meaty character, fleshy but supple tannin, and fairly long salted plum aftertaste. Nice wine. Classic hearty regional stuff.</p> <p>92pts JamesSuckling.com (Nick Stock) This plump and juicy shiraz has attractively ripe aromas and flavors of red plums that are coated in chocolate, as well as some tarry hints and dark cherries. The palate has depth and approachability with a plush, lip-smacking finish. Drink over the next six years.</p> <p>91 points - Vinous (Josh Reynolds)</p> <p>90 points - The Real Review (Aaron Brasher) Expressive aromatics of dark fruits, dried herbs, vanilla and spice. Dark flavours of satsuma plum, blackcurrants, mulberry, chocolate and a lick of mintiness. There's a brightness and freshness to the palate, the tannins are granular and grippy and the acid gives cut and definition.</p> <p>17/20 points JancisRobinson.com How can you resist that fruit? Absolutely pixel-perfect plum and brambles on the nose and palate. Sieved tannins and milk-chocolate persistence. There's a lightness to this which is a very different mode to that of Penfolds, say. (RH)</p>



THISTLEDOWN



2019	<p>TOP 100 (96pts) James Halliday A full-bodied shiraz that reflects cunning winemaking. Whole berry fermentation has put a rich gloss on the palate without overloading the tannin structure. The predominantly black berry fruit is shot through with licorice, spice and an airbrush of dark chocolate. Drink to 2039, screwcap, 14.5% alc</p> <p>93pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com A smoothly delivered shiraz that has deep, fleshy and seductive appeal. The fresh blackberry, plum and mulberry aromas are nicely dosed with oak spice and deliver such soft, smooth style on the palate. Really effortless drinkability. Drink now. Screw cap.</p> <p>92pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front I tend to think of Thistledown as being Grenache specialists, but they turn out some pretty stylish Shiraz too. Floral with black fruit, chocolate and something like dried beef. A good dose of McLaren Shiraz here offering flavour with some restraint, a good amount of chewy texture, some spice and fruitcake on a solid finish. Tidy.</p> <p>BRONZE MEDAL Royal Adelaide Wine Show 2020</p> <p>90pts Wine Spectator</p>
2018	<p>92pts James Suckling Ripe red berries and blackberries, flowers and hints of citrus rind pervade the nose with a fresh core of quite plush dark-berry and chocolate flavors. Ripe blackberries and spice to close. Drink now. Screw cap.</p> <p>91pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front This is from McLaren Flat, raised in old French oak. I watched one of the first episodes of Black Adder the other week, and always interesting / ageing to see shows filmed in the old box screen format. Blackberry, beef jerky, a little mint and spice. It's medium to full-bodied, savoury and quite spicy, thick with black fruit and smudgy tannin, some dried herb and a solid dry and savoury finish. You can sink your teeth into this, though it's not hard to swallow.</p> <p>90pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review . A stylish wine.</p> <p>90pts The Wine Advocate</p>



THISTLEDOWN



THE QUICKENING SHIRAZ

2022

93pts JamesSuckling.com

93pts The Real Review

2021

95pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate

95pts The Vintage Journal

93+pts The Wine Front

93pts Halliday Wine Companion

93pts JamesSuckling.com

92pts Gournet Traveller Wine

90pts Vinous/ Wine Pilot

2020

96pts & Special Value Halliday Wine Companion

95pts JamesSuckling.com

94pts The Wine Front

92+pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate

92pts JamesSuckling.com

92pts The Real Review

2019

94pts The Wine Front

93pts JamesSuckling.com

92pts The Real Review

BRONZE MEDAL Royal Adelaide Wine Show 2020

90pts Wine Advocate

2018

93pts JamesSuckling.com

92pts The Wine Front

2022

93 points - JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

This wine offers very good value, beaming cooler climatic syrah aromas of florals and purple fruits across a force-field of extract, impressive power and yet, a welcome prowess when it comes to the management of the tannins. A card of sophistication at the Barossan table. Appreciated, too, just how delineated and transparent the suite of shiraz at this address has become, echoing the grenaches.

93 points - The Real Review (Stuart Knox)

Vibrant purple from core to rim. Mulberry, liquorice and dried beef aromas. Intense blue and purple fruits, rich and weighty with hints of savoury wakame and meaty undertones. A full throttle Barossa shiraz that has the classic velvet glove caress with the iron fist power.

2021

95 points - Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)

Now this is a treat. The cool 2021 season has really gifted the 2021 The Quickening Shiraz with detail, openness and poise, and the tannins emerge as being one of the true highlights. They are ultra fine and grippy, a little bit chewy, and serve to frame the fruit in such a way that they extend the line and length of the experience. I'm smiling as I type this, and I think that's a great sign that I like the wine very much. Delicious.

95pts The Vintage Journal, Andrew Caillard MW and Angus Hughson

Generously flavoured with inky blackberry pastille flavours, fine loose-knit chalky tannins, very good mid-palate density and well-balanced savoury notes. Finishes bittersweet with a lovely tannin plume. Unforced and delicious.

93+ points - Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Dried flowers and spice, raspberry and blackberry, a little sullen youthful char here, though you can see how the wine wants to be underneath that, which is fragrant and lively. Medium-bodied, juicy red and black fruits, spicy too, with emery tannin, a subtle meatiness, and a fresh



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	<p>finish of fine length. A subtle saltbush flavour in the mix too. Almost certainly more to come here.</p> <p>93 points - Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) A deep ruby. Cracked pepper, cardamon and thyme. Plenty floral, too, once the glass is given a workout. The tannins, big -boned and finely articulated, serve to splay the spiced complexities across the refined latticework, from attack to long finish. A rich wine, but cagey, reticent and nicely standoffish in the mouth. Each glass reveals a different nuance as a result.</p> <p>93 points - JamesSuckling.com Very bright shiraz with berry intensity, together with aromas and flavors crushed stones, asphalt and stone. Full and compact, with transparency and freshness. Red volcanic salt at the end.</p> <p>92 points – Gourmet Traveller Wine (Best New Releases) The palate has such supple and enveloping fruit that wraps softly around soft tannins. Delivers so much flavour.</p> <p>92 points - The Real Review (Huon Hooke) Deep, bold and bright purple-red colour, the bouquet is intense with licorice and black fruit characters, the palate full-bodied and fleshy, solid and concentrated with density and masses of ripe tannins. This should age beautifully and be long lived.</p> <p>90 points – Vinous/ Wine Pilot (Angus Hughson) This attractive, quite early drinking style of Barossa Shiraz does exhibit good layers of complexity as it delivers soy sauce, black cherry and mulberry fruits that are well integrated with spicy oak. Dry and mid weight, it is juicy on the palate thanks to the cooler season and then finishes with decent length offset by grainy tannins.</p>
2020	<p>96 points & Special Value – James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion Wild fermented with some whole-bunch inclusion; aged in French oak for 8 months. A striking wine, as juicy as quicksilver on the first whiff and taste, before the spicy, savoury whole-bunch nuances come into play. Has the X-factor.</p> <p>95 points - JamesSuckling.com Open and fresh, with flowers, green tobacco, purple fruit and dark bitter chocolate. Some orange peel, too. It's medium-bodied with a compact palate and creamy tannins. Toasted oak at the end. Drink or hold. Screw cap.</p> <p>94 points Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Mainly Eden Valley, with a little bit from farther down the hill in the Barossa Valley. Ripe and spicy dark fruit, kind of like spicy fruit pillow biscuits in a way, also chocolate, with dried mint and sage perfume. It's fleshy and deeply flavoured, some stony grip, juicy orange and a long fresh herb finish. Very good.</p> <p>92+ points – Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin) Despite the earthy framework, there is a freshness at the very heart of this wine (and abundant aromas too) that keeps the experience pleasurable and engaging.</p> <p>92 points - JamesSuckling.com (Nick Stock) 92 points - The Real Review (Aaron Brasher)</p>
2019	<p>94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front 93pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com 92pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review 90pts Wine Advocate BRONZE MEDAL Royal Adelaide Wine Show 2020</p>
2018	<p>Silver Medal Barossa Valley Wine Show 2019 93pts James Halliday 93pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front 93pts The Wine Advocate 92pts James Suckling</p>



THISTLEDOWN



SILKEN BEASTIE SHIRAZ

2018	2017	2016	2015
93pts The Wine Advocate 91pts Halliday	94pts Halliday 94pts The Wine Front 92pts James Suckling	95pts Halliday	96pts Halliday 92pts The Wine Front 91pts Huon Hooke
2018	93pts Robert Parker's The Wine Advocate Made with 40% whole clusters from three sites in the northwestern Barossa Valley and aged over a year in 30% new oak, the 2018 Silken Beastie Shiraz lives up to its name, delivering raspberries, vanilla and mint on a full-bodied, creamy palate framed by silky tannins. It's mouthwatering and long on the finish, only slowly fading away. 91pts, Halliday Wine Companion 2021 A meld of fruit from Ebenezer, Kalimna and Koonunga has been handled minimally: fermented indigenously with the inclusion of a small percentage of whole-bunch. The result is rich and seamless. Bitter chocolate. Lilac. Anise, Liquorice. Damson plum and searingly ripe black cherry, with a solid riff of oak. A polished full-bodied wine that will please many.		
2017	94pts James Halliday From three blocks in the Ebenezer district, whole-bunch inclusion between zero and 40% across the blocks, wild-fermented and macerated, 13 months in French hogsheads (50% new) then a best barrel selection. Oak opens the betting on both the bouquet and palate, but has solid fruit support that should be sufficient to carry the wine to a declaration of readiness for consumption. 94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Blackcurrant, blackberry, something like caramel coated popcorn, spice and dried flower perfume. Medium-bodied, dense feel to the wine, though not heavy, plenty of rich silty tannin, spice and cracked wheat, smooth long finish with an almost lavender and sage perfume trailing. Pleasing sense of composure here, and already very good to drink. 92pts James Suckling This has a deep, blackberry core of aromas and flavors with earth and baking spices also in the mix. The palate texture is luxurious and very fleshy and the dark-berry flavors hold bright and long. Drink now. Screw cap.		
2016	95pts James Halliday You get a lot of expensive wine in your mouth, so rich it seems viscous, with liquor cherry (which isn't sweet) and finishes bright and fresh (like an Amontillado sherry, which likewise isn't sweet). And glory be, there's no sweet alcohol to deal with.' Screwcap. 14.5% alc. To: 2027.		



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2015

96pts James Halliday

90% Barossa Shiraz from Kalimna/ Koonuga/ Ebenezer, and 10% old bushvine Grenache from Blewitt Springs. Deep, although bright, crimson-purple, delicious red and black cherry, plum and blackberry fruits are handsomely framed by fine, ripe tannins and quality French oak. At the moment that oak needs to pull in its horns, but a couple of years will give it no alternative but to do just that.' Screwcap. To: 2035.

92+pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Great name for a wine. You'd want to say it with a Scottish accent to best effect, I'd say. Billy Connolly would do a great job. Richness, chocolate and perfume, boysenberry ripple, dried mint, stalk and spice. Medium to full bodied, a bit of grainy tannin here, so not entirely silken, with a slightly too enthusiastic nip from acidity, and a kind of raspberried freshness to the pretty long finish, gently stalky tannin dragging it out.

91pts Huon Hooke

Deep red/purple colour. Oak is the most evident note on the nose, and the wine is medium to full-bodied and smoothly-textured with good intensity of fruit and the oak is supportive on the palate, not running the show. Sweet middle and a clean finish.



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BACHELOR'S BLOCK SHIRAZ

<p>2022 95pts JamesSuckling.com 95pts The Real Review</p>	<p>2021 95pts Halliday Wine Companion 95pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate 95pts JamesSuckling.com 94pts The Wine Front 93pts Halliday Wine Companion 93pts Decanter 93pts The Vintage Journal 93pts The Real Review</p>	<p>2020 96pts Halliday Wine Companion 96pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate 94pts Vinous/ Wine Pilot 94pts JamesSuckling.com 92pts The Real Review 17/20pts JancisRobinson.com</p> <p>2018 95pts The Wine Advocate 95pts Halliday 93pts Wine Spectator</p>	<p>2017 96pts & Great Value Halliday 94pts The Wine Front 92pts James Suckling</p> <p>2016 97pts Halliday 93+pts The Wine Front</p> <p>2015 94pts Halliday 93+pts The Wine Front 91pts Huon Hooke</p>
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2022 **95 points JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)**
 This is a full-weighted wine drawn taut by peppery, sinewy tannins, meshed with an uncanny vibrato of freshness. Pointed accents of lilac, crushed musk, green and black peppercorn, a swirl of blue fruit allusions and a clench of reduction, evincing tension to the finish. Nothing that a brisk decant won't fix. Better, mid-term aging.

95 points (Top Rank) The Real Review (Stuart Knox)
 Opaque core into a rich purple rim. Rich nose of blood plum, dry earth and bresaola. Rich, dense and slippery with intense black and blue fruits filling the mouth and underlying notes of iodine and dusty ground adding character and appeal. Tannins are prodigious yet of the finest grain, ensuring phenomenal length and focus without taking away from the velvet glide the wine shows.

2021 **95 points Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)**
95 points JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)
 This is exceptional from first whiff. Full bodied, to be sure, yet the handling accentuates a furled tannic kit, quality oak and savvy work with whole bunches (35%) delivering a savoury tour de force iterated as black olive pith, tar, blood, clove, aniseed, mace and a ferrous underbelly of ironstone echoing the site. The mid-palate slips into the girth of Barossa, imparting sweet purple fruits and weight. It is always easy, of course, to want less of what is on offer given a region's tendency toward fruity, heavy wines, yet the thrum of energy here delivers length, welcome restraint and serious complexity. The nose alone is worth the price!

95 points Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)
 The 2021 Bachelor's Block Ebenezer Shiraz hails from a cooler vintage than the previously tasted and much warmer 2020, however the Ebenezer region does not allow for a light wine to be made, whatever the season. This has density, gravitas and black pull at its very center and is shaped by a rachis of earthy, savory tannins in the mouth. It has blood plum, date, black tea, sweet Champion Ruby tobacco, turned black earth and crushed rocks aplenty. The length of flavor through the finish spools and unfurls and almost gyrates across the tongue and the memory. This is a big wine, with amplitude and impact in equal measure.



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94 points The Wine Front (Gary Walsh)

Ebenezer Shiraz with 35% whole bunch. Dutch liquoice, spice, blackberry, cracked wheat and dried mint. It's rich and fleshy, a little ferrous and earthy, kind of saline, but has some raspberry/blackberry pip freshness, a little orange peel bitterness, a quiet 'mineral' character runs through it, and the finish is all silty and spiked with clove and cherry liqueur. Structure is excellent, and it's a wine of distinct character and personality. Excellent.

93pts The Vintage Journal (Andrew Caillard MW and Angus Hughson)

Deep crimson. Fresh dark plum, blackberry, bitter dark chocolate, demi-glace aromas. Richly concentrated dark plum, blackberry pastille, dark chocolate, mocha flavours, fine bittersweet tannins and fresh, long integrated acidity. Finish firm and tangy.

93pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

A deep ruby. Cracked pepper, cardamon and thyme. Plenty floral, too, once the glass is given a workout. The tannins, big -boned and finely articulated, serve to splay the spiced complexities across the refined latticework, from attack to long finish. A rich wine, but cagey, reticent and nicely standoffish in the mouth. Each glass reveals a different nuance as a result.

93 points Decanter

Deep, dense primary black fruit with hints of vanilla and oaked spice. Generous palate with peppery layers of dark blackcurrant, razor-sharp acidity and chalky tannins. A joy to drink.

93pts The Real Review (Stuart Knox)

Deep ruby and purple in the glass. Ripe mulberry, crushed violets, and nori aromatics. Rich and dense black fruits fill the mouth, the intensity and richness just pushing the ripeness to the edge, but balance is brought by dusty tannins and a deep cola spice layer. Prodigious in length, this wine will build further with time in the cellar.

2020

96pts Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

Sourced from a single, propitiously sited block in Ebenezer. Hand picked, fermented spontaneously with a seasoning of whole bunches, before maturation in French wood. Subdued aromas of blueberry, licorice, clove, dried nori, saffras and kirsch. Plenty of oomph. But classy. No jam, or overt angles. The acidity, briny. The tannins, an immaculate sheath, as polished as it is detailed, articulating the fruit and spicy underbelly as a long, chinotto-soused finish. This opens up nicely with time, becoming floral. But still a nascent proposition, needing a whack into a decanter. Superlative, full-bodied shiraz, for those who appreciate structure and refinement.

96pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)

The fruit profile here is very, very different to the 2020 Where Eagles Dare (Eden Valley). The Ebenezer region provides red dirt and bloody meat with ease; here, the 2020 Bachelor's Block Ebenezer Shiraz brings the earth right into the glass, but it couches it in a way that it seems supple and sophisticated. This is plush and thrilling and, most importantly, satisfying, because when great wine hits all of these marks, it's a reason to get excited.

94pts Vinous/ Wine Pilot (Angus Hughson)

The bold, rich and classically styled Barossan delivers a high volume of fruit – chocolate covered blackberries, toasty oak, and baked earth provide a decadent start. The palate is then quite muscular, with waves of robust dark fruit flavours underpinned by particulate tannins before building to a long, strong finish. A crowd pleaser that will deliver plenty over the next decade.

94pts Nick Stock, James Suckling.com

Sourced from a vineyard in Ebenezer, this has a rich and plush appeal and is packed with blackberry aromas and flavors. Some mulberry, red plum and spice, too. Texturally it has the X-factor of softness with power and enveloping concentration. Drink or hold.

92pts Stuart Knox, The Real Review

Deep and almost impenetrable ruby-red colour with a purple-tinged rim. Blackberry, iodine and mocha on the nose. A powerful and intense wine—there's ample dark fruits that match up to meaty-savoury elements. Simultaneously, the tannins bring tension and drive to focus the fruit-weight and it goes long into the finish.

17/20 points JancisRobinson.com



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	<p>More red-fruited than their Cunning Plan, with the same lightness of touch in body but no shortage of fruit intensity. Succulent acid, fine tannins and plenty of tarry thickness on the finish. A classic South Australian Shiraz at a premium level that shows more lightness of touch than many styles. (RH)</p>
2018	<p>95pts The Wine Advocate Grown by Andy Kalleske, the 2018 Bachelor's Block Ebenezer Shiraz is textbook Barossa Valley Shiraz, with bold notes of purple raspberries and mint but also ample weight and concentration on the full-bodied palate, creamy, supple tannins and a rich, velvety and mouthwatering finish. Made with one-third whole clusters and matured in one-third new oak, neither shows much on the surface, but both impart extra dimension to this multifaceted wine. It should drink well for at least a decade.</p> <p>95pts Halliday Wine Companion I like this. A lot! Again, a sturdy clutch of whole-bunch (40%) mettle and a twine of peppery acidity serves to galvanise teeming blue and black fruit flavours with a sense of restraint. No shortage of richness, soaring violet aromas and the heft desired by many. Barossa, after all. But the overall sense is of a wine from somewhere cooler; a hand with a deft touch. Vinous density juxtaposed against an uncanny lightness and thrumming intensity. Kudos!</p> <p>93pts Wine Spectator</p>
2017	<p>96pts & Great Value, James Halliday 94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front 92pts James Suckling</p>
2016	<p>97pts James Halliday 93+ pts Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front</p>
2015	<p>94pts James Halliday - 93+pts Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front - 91pts Huon Hooke</p>



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WHERE EAGLE'S DARE SHIRAZ

2022

95pts JamesSuckling.com

95pts The Real Review

2021

94pts The Vintage Journal

94pts Halliday Wine Companion

93pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate

93pts The Wine Front

93pts The Real Review

2020

97pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate

95pts The Real Review

94pts Halliday Wine Companion

94pts JamesSuckling.com

93pts Vinous/ Wine Pilot

92pts The Wine Front

2019

94pts Vinous

94pts The Wine Front

93pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate

2022

95 points – JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

The best iteration of this cuvee to date, with a cooler aura to a nose of violet, crushed mace, clove, mossy iodine and dark fruit allusions laced with Sichuan pepper grind, salumi and black olive paste. This is a powerful expression, to be sure. Yet it is surprisingly deft and light on its feet, tucking in the extract nicely behind seams of well managed, gristly tannins. This will age nicely. Drinkable now, but best from 2026.

95 points (Top Rank) – The Real Review (Stuart Knox)

Virtually opaque at the core, just fading slightly to a deep ruby rim. Blueberry, charred meat and crushed violet aromatics. Has serious dark fruit density and power, as it runs deep there's ferrous minerality and meaty undertones. Tannins are powerful and chewy which suits all the weight on offer, and it all rolls incredibly long on the palate.

2021

94 points – The Vintage Journal (Andrew Caillard MW and Angus Hughson)

Deep crimson. Fragrant blackberry, plum, dark chocolate aromas with graphite notes. Well-concentrated blackberry, dark plum, black cherry fruits, fine chalky textures, long juicy acidity and well-balanced savoury complexity. Finishes bittersweet with attractive mineral length.

94 points – Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW)

Sourced from the Mengler Hill site in Eden Valley. Hand picked and fermented wild in a concrete egg, replete with 20% whole bunches, before transfer to French oak (20% new). A lather of lilac, lavender and aniseed defines a sumptuous nose. Purple fruits and rosewater, the palate, with a creep of tannin growing in gravitas across the back end as the wine opens. This is a delicious, full-weighted expression of considerable class and detail. Top of the totem in the region.

93 points – Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)

The 2021 Where Eagles Dare Shiraz hails from the Mattschoss vineyard up in Eden Valley, and the wine is initially quite aromatically subdued. In the mouth, the fruit bursts from the docks, with licorice, blackberry, mulberry and black olive brine. The wine feels like it needs a really good decant to assist it in unfurling and giving up some of the characters we know it can have. The wine is elegant and fine yet grunty and forthright, driven by tannin and grit in the mouth.



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	<p>For all of these descriptors, the wine is actually elegant, but it just does so with some texture, which I like. Bottle number 0996 of 1775, 14.5% alcohol, sealed under Diam and wax</p> <p>93 points – The Wine Front (Gary Walsh) In my opinion, Grenache is the main game for Thistledown. Their Shiraz is good, but their Grenache is next level. Dark cherry, plenty of biscuit spice and sweet oak, floral too, with a slightly grassy/wheatgerm character. It's very purple tasting, blueberry and boysenberry pie, sage brushed and gently herbal, with a juicy finish of excellent length. A little bit saline with it, some crushed rock tannin as it goes. Maybe oak is a little too dominant as at now, though the fruit wins the day. Very good.</p> <p>93 points – The Real Review (Stuart Knox) Bright purple from core to rim. Cherry cola, crushed lavender and thyme aromatics. Medium to full bodied with bright plum fruit on the palate that is well matched to mountain herb and graphite mineral savoury elements. Still very primary and youthful but there's no doubting the intensity or drive. Give it plenty of air or cellar time before enjoying.</p>
2020	<p>97 points – Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin) The fruit for the 2020 Where Eagles Dare Shiraz is from the Mattschoss Vineyard in the Eden Valley. One assumes the title refers to the great elevation at which this vineyard is situated; 550 meters above sea level is a commanding perch. The dirt up there is pink quartz pressed into ironstone, and it's compacted into all the dirt roads you care to drive down. It's a beautiful thing, actually. Aromatically, the wine offers up sumac, biltong and mulberries with a graphite, crushed lead-pencil character. The wine is minerally and layered with black tea, spring flowers, red apple skins and a raft of forest berries. Really smart, and a decant is going to open this up untold.</p> <p>95 points – The Real Review (Aaron Brasher) Young, purple and deep in colour. Aromas of satsuma plum, dark cherry, cola, dried herbs, vanilla and spice. Rich and dark-fruit flavoured, plush with plenty of plum and blackberry, there's a sarsparilla lift as well. Acidity is bright and lively. Firm, textured tannins give structure and mouth-feel and provide a counter to the lush fruit.</p> <p>94 points – Halliday Wine Companion (Ned Goodwin MW) 94 points – JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW) Hand-picked from a site hewn out of pink quartz and ironstone at 550m elevation. Fermented wild and aged for 12 months in tight-grained French wood. This is dense, compact and tense enough to allow for graceful ageing. A large-framed and clearly warm-climate wine, yet the tannins are refined and saliva-inducing. In its infancy it has aromas of cedar and mocha oak, bitter chocolate, iodine, black olive tapenade, anise and blue-to-darker fruit allusions with a hint of violet and charcuterie. Very good.</p> <p>93 points – Vinous/ Wine Pilot (Angus Hughson) From the highly regarded Mattschoss Vineyard high up in the Eden Valley comes this powerful yet reserved Barossan showing its cooler climate origins as it delivers hearty aromas of roasted meats, licorice, baked earth and old spices backed by chocolate and blackberry with a lining of vanillin oak. The palate is then plush as it delivers waves of fleshy dark berry fruits, with a line of spice always in play. Tannins are slightly firm but well integrated then support a lengthy finish. Already drinking well but will also improve over the medium term.</p> <p>92pts The Wine Front (Gary Walsh) Blackberry, blackcurrant, floral too, plenty of mint and sage, with toasty cinnamon and clove oak. It's supple, dark fruited, a menthol and mint coolness here too, almond paste and spicy oak. Tannin is milky soft, and spreads nicely through the palate, slightly saline, blueberries and raspberry, with firm powdery tannin running on a mint nougat finish of fine length.</p>
2019	<p>94pts The Wine Front Fermented in concrete egg, 20% whole bunch, from a vineyard perched up at 550m above the level of the sea. Perfume and spice over brooding black fruit and dark chocolate. It's a little bit chewy, rich and packed with nuts and dark chocolate, but has that layer of spice and perfume coming through which lightens and adds contour and detail. Tannin is thick and gummy, the</p>



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finish long and rolling. It's an excellent expression of Barossa Shiraz, and very nicely turned out too.

94 points – Vinous (Josh Raynold)

93pts Wine Advocate

Hints of crushed stone and dried herbs accent the blueberry-scented nose of the 2019 Where Eagles Dare Shiraz. Sourced from a vineyard at 550 meters above sea level, it's a large-scaled wine but one without much in the way of puppy fat. Medium to full-bodied, structured and sinewy, with a generous helping of silky tannins and a lingering, intense finish marked by savory overtones of mocha, anise and dried herbs, it should age well for more than a decade.



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DISTANT LIGHT GRENACHE SHIRAZ

2021

96pts – The Real Review
95pts – Halliday Wine Companion
95pts – Robert Parker Wine Advocate
95pts – The Wine Front
94pts – JamesSuckling.com

2020

97pts – Vinous/ Wine Pilot
96pts – The Real Review
94pts – Robert Parker Wine Advocate
93pts – JamesSuckling.com
91pts – The Wine Front

2018

95pts – Halliday Wine Companion
95pts – The Real Review
95pts – The Wine Front
94pts – James Suckling
93pts – Robert Parker Wine Advocate

2021

96pts – The Real Review (Huon Hooke)

A superb wine in which the components mesh together perfectly. Seamless texture, fleshy richness, intensity and balance. An outstanding example of the style.

95pts – Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin)

The 2021 Distant Light Grenache Shiraz is polished and spicy and supple, with an unbroken flow of flavor across the palate. The tannins from both Shiraz and Grenache swirl in concert, like a perfectly linked DNA chain from front to back. The wine is polished and succulent, with saturated red and black fruits. The Grenache component is from Blewitt Springs and Clarendon in McLaren Vale, and the Shiraz is from the Barossa, Ebenezer and Mengler's Hill. Talk about blending super regions and super varieties. It's a glossy wine, totally lustrous and sleek. Between you and me, the tannins manage to retain their savory/earthy/gritty countenance amid the sea of fruit, and this juxtaposition is the secret to its success.

95pts – Halliday Wine Companion (Marcus Ellis)

A blend across the prime Thistledown sites, with McLaren Vale grenache from the Trott and Smart vineyards, and the Barossa shiraz from Mengler Hill and two blocks in Koonunga/Ebenezer. This is an interesting cross-regional blend, with lifted aromatics, red and blue florals, menthol, black and red cherry, some alpine-like herbs, bunchy autumnal notes, warm spices, pepper, wild raspberry, preserved plum and dried orange peel. The grenache feels the moderating element here, cinching in the Barossa shiraz, a trailing freshness making even more sense of the cross-regional coupling.

95pts – The Wine Front (Gary Walsh)

Grenache from Blewitt Springs and Clarendon, with Shiraz from Ebenezer and Mengler Hill. 51% Grenache, 49% Shiraz.

Plenty of exotic spice and perfume, dark cherry, dried raspberry, cocoa, a little marzipan. It's medium to full-bodied, smooth and slinky, with fine silty tannin, perfume and succulence of cherry and strawberry, with a long and subtly stony saline finish. The mesh of McLaren Vale Grenache and Barossa Shiraz works to such good effect. Delightful!

94pts – JamesSuckling.com (Ned Goodwin MW)

A neighbourly blend from the continental extremities of Barossa, to the maritime freshness of McLaren Vale. It works well, too. Umami-laden aromas of beef dripping, porcini, Japanese daikon and bouillon. Mulled cherry, tea tree, clove and white pepper. The finish, taut and nicely racy. There seems to be ample stuffing behind the immediate veneer of tannin,



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	<p>suggesting that this full-weighted, albeit, elegant wine, has loads in store for those with patience. Drinkable now with an aggressive decant, but best after 2027.</p>
2020	<p>97pts – Vinous/ Wine Pilot (Angus Hughson) This immediately enticing and complete wine draws you in with its intriguing blend of ethereal aromas with more than a passing resemblance to fine Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Suave dark cherry, charcuterie, peppery spice, raspberry and roasted meat aromas deliver power and subtlety, beautifully matched to sweet oak. The Shiraz and Grenache then come together superbly to deliver a mouthfilling palate with fantastic fruit density plus a rich velvety texture underlined by firm tannins that builds to peacock's tail finish. Seriously impressive.</p> <p>96pts - The Real Review (Huon Hooke) Good depth of colour and hue, there are some char-oak aromas but the bouquet while clean and fresh is a bit shy. The palate has ironstone and graphite as well as char-oak over rich plummy fruit and pleasingly supple tannins giving it an agreeably soft texture. It's young and straightforward now and would reward cellaring. Concentrated and velvet-smooth, with a tremendously long aftertaste. Great potential.</p> <p>94pts Robert Parker Wine Advocate (Erin Larkin) In line with all the other wines from Thistledown, the 2020 Distant Light Grenache Shiraz is medium bodied, supple, fresh, spicy and mellifluous. It's a pleasure to drink, and it speaks of both regions with clarity. The Barossa brings earth and grit, gravitas and density, while McLaren peppers the wine with life and red fruit. The tannins are a highlight; they're very fine and chalky, but they do their bit with shaping the wine and driving the flavor through into the finish.</p> <p>93pts Ned Goodwin MW, JamesSuckling.com Barossa shiraz (Ebenezer and Mengler Hill) with Blewitt Springs grenache. Frankly, it would be finer without the Barossa intrusion. However, this is a stylistic choice that many will enjoy, marked by more obvious oak than Thistledown's other top wines. Full-bodied, with iodine, camphor and plentiful dark fruit allusions. Densely packed, with a sluice of menthol, anise and toasty oak to curb an intense finish that remains admirably fresh.</p> <p>91pts The Wine Front (Gary Walsh) Exotic spice, marzipan, red and black fruits, a bit of bacon bone and mint. It's medium-bodied, nutty and fleshy, plenty of spice and poached strawberry, maybe sits a little flat on the palate, and lacking a little vigour and energy, fine grained tannin, and a smoky meaty and salty finish of solid length. Good wine, and I'd maybe say drink it on the younger side.</p>
2018	<p>95pts Ned Goodwin, Halliday Wine Companion A neighbourly blend of grenache from Blewitt Springs and Clarendon in the Vale, with warmer shiraz from Ebenezer and Mengler Hill. Picked by hand, fermented under the aegis of spontaneity with ample whole-bunch seasoning and maturation in top-drawer French oak. This is seamless. Again, the tannins maketh the wine: pithy, taut and juicy. Gorgeous aromas of mottled red plum, five-spice, white pepper, clove, cardamon and kirsch, expanding across the finish. Grenache the clear leader of the pack. For the better. Thrilling length. I'd drink this with youth on its side.</p> <p>95pts - The Real Review (Huon Hooke) Deep, bright red/purple colour. Smoky-meaty, oaky and slightly animal aromas, with some age development evident. Touches of dark chocolate. The wine is drying and very savoury in the mouth, some oak evident, the aftertaste firm and very drying. Shiraz seems to be driving it, rather than grenache. Powerful finish and great length. It's a contrast to the usual Thistledown style and seems built for ageing. The solid backbone would be softened by a hearty meat dish. (Shiraz from Ebenezer and Mengler Hill; grenache from Blewitt Springs and Clarendon).</p> <p>95pts – Club Oenologique (Huon Hooke) The winemaker, Englishman Giles Cooke MW, used Barossa Shiraz grapes sourced from Ebenezer and Mengler Hill plus McLaren Vale Grenache from Blewitt Springs and Clarendon. This is powerful, concentrated and dark, a more structured wine than Thistledown's usual</p>



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style, with flavours ranging from smoked meat to dark chocolate, backed by firm drying tannins. A solid, age-worthy red.

95pts The Wine Front

Grenache (51%) from Blewitt Springs and Clarendon meets Shiraz (49%) from Ebenezer and Eden Valley. Raised in concrete and large format French oak.

All the berries, exotic spice, dried mint and sage, musk and roses. Just over medium-bodied, love the feel of the suede-like tannin, ripe berries, dried beef and grilled mushroom, spicy, perfumed and long to close. Classic feel to this, and I'd say it will age pretty nicely too.

94pts - JamesSuckling.com

A blend with such an intense nose of ripe blackberries, raspberries and blueberries, as well as a sanguine, savory edge already adding interest. Deep flavors and a velvety, smooth texture in the mouth. Long finish. Drink over the next eight years.

93pts Wine Advocate

'A blend of 51% McLaren Vale Grenache (from Blewitt Springs and Clarendon) and 49% Barossa Shiraz (from growers Hoffmann, Kelleske and Mattschoss), the 2018 Distant Light Grenache Shiraz displays more obvious oak than the other Thistledown wines, despite being aged in a mix of larger-format barrels and concrete vessels. The notes of cedar and vanilla are balanced by concentrated cherry-berry fruit, with delicate herbal nuances (mint, bay leaf) adding welcome grace notes. It's medium to full-bodied and silky on the palate, polished, refined and elegant, with a long, harmonious finish.'

