



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 WINE COMPANY



GREAT ESCAPE CHARDONNAY

2019	2018	2017	2015	2014
90pts James Suckling	90pts The Wine Advocate 90pts The Wine Front	93pts Natasha Hughes MW 90pts Halliday	93pts Tony Keys	92pts Tony Keys 91pts The Wine Front 90pts James Suckling
2019	90pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com ‘An open-knit impression from the outset with bright melon, as well as some citrus and peaches. The palate is smooth, fresh and fruit-focused. Drink now. Screw cap.’			
2018	90pts Robert Parker’s The Wine Advocate There are 400 cases of the 2018 Great Escape Chardonnay, and most of the wine was made in steel and concrete. The 10% that was fermented in French oak gives the wine just a hint of toast and cedar, but it's mostly about white peaches and citrus. Medium-bodied and silky-textured, it finishes crisp and mouthwatering. 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. And now the label seems to be just that. So, my usual moronic introductions sometimes find an appreciative home, I guess.			
2017	93pts Natasha Hughes WM “Subtly hedonistic. The linear palate shows a core of pure, juicy white peach and citrus fruit, tinged with smoky minerality. Plenty of focus on the long finish.” 90pts Halliday A mix of hand and machine-picked, the former whole-bunch pressed and wild-fermented in used French hogsheads, no mlf, with regular stirring; the machine-picked portion was whole-berry pressed. This is as honest as they come, and can't be compared to Margaret River or Yarra Valley. Rich, peachy fruit will attract those wanting something to get their teeth into. Love the label.			
2015	93pts Tony Keys A gentle start that builds as it travels. “Crisp” was the word that came to mind. 93 points and good value at \$25.			



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SUILVEN CHARDONNAY

2019	2018	2017	2016
93+pts The Wine Front 93pts James Suckling	95pts Nick Butler 92+pts The Wine Front 92pts The Wine Advocate 91pts James Halliday 90pts James Suckling	95pts Halliday 94pts Huon Hooke 93pts The Wine Front 92pts James Suckling	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>		
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 This has a very nicely integrated mix of peaches and lemons with nutty, savory aromas. The palate is supple and quite creamy and vanilla-custard flavors hold the finish. Drink now.</p>		

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SÜLVEN CHARDONNAY

2017

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.

94pts Huon Hooke

Very light colour. A shy, reserved and youthfully straightforward mineral 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.

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.

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.

2016

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.

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GORGEOUS GRENACHE ROSÉ

2019

93pts Sam Kim, Wine Orbit

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

92pts Nick Butler

Bright, pale pink colour. Raspberry and musk, loads of personality, lifted aromatics that draw you back to the glass. It's pleasantly sweet - again, with musk and toffee apple teasing then tapering into a balanced, crisp finish. Lovely wine.

THISTLEDOWN WINE COMPANY



GORGEOUS GRENACHE

2019	2018	2017	2016
94pts Wine Orbit 92pts The Wine Front	92pts Halliday 92pts Suckling 91pts Wine Front	16pts Jancis Robinson	91pts The Wine Front
2019	<p>94pts Sam Kim, Wine Orbit A fabulous rendition of the variety, showing bright fruit characters of dark cherry and sweet plum with floral, olive and subtle anise notes on the nose. The palate is equally satisfying with succulent fruit intensity and lovely mid-palate weight, wonderfully supported by fine texture and silky tannins, leading to a lengthy supple finish. At its best: now to 2025.</p> <p>92pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front It's labelled as South Australia, which is true enough, though more specifically comes from the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale. And I think some old vines in the Riverland, though the website offers conflicting information. Anyway, here's the wine. The name is indeed, not misleading. Poached strawberries with fresh mint, some brown spice and musk perfume. It's supple and juicy, soft powdery tannin, succulence and easy drinking appeal, not over done, and only really medium-bodied. It begins well, and ends well. It's an easy wine to like.</p>		
2018	<p>92pts James Halliday Employs old vines in the Riverland, McLaren Vale and Barossa Valley, matured in used French hogsheads and stainless steel. A confectionery streak was/is inevitable, and others will find it less distracting than I do. Regardless, it's a good drink at the price. Drink soon.</p> <p>92pts James Suckling Unmistakable fresh flowers and red berries here that are delivered amid gently earthy notes. The palate has a plush, vibrant and attractive feel with juicy, upbeat tannins to close. Drink now. Screw cap.</p> <p>91pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Nice packaging. From the Riverland I believe. By heck love, you smell gorgeous tonight. Spicy, scrub herb and samphire, raspberry. Medium-bodied, gentle lick of tannin, saline and savoury, solid finish. Light, but very easy to like.</p>		
2017	<p>16pts Jancis Robinson MW 90% Grenache, 10% Shiraz. From old vines grown in Riverland. 33% undergo whole-bunch fermentation using wild yeasts in an open fermenter and foot-trodden twice daily at first, before gentle hand-plunging for the remainder of the ferment. Ferments are then pressed straight to barrel for 6–8 months' ageing. Pale crimson. Brilliant label. Round and easy – because of the grape not the residual sugar. Fresh and lively.</p>		
2016	<p>91pts Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front Varietal. Anise, raspberry, earth and cloves, with attractive/fragrant dry spice notes littered throughout. Clove notes here tip very close to gum nut territory without quite tipping over. If you can put the unfortunate front label out of your mind, this is a very good grenache.</p>		

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THORNY DEVIL GRENACHE

2019	2018	2017	2016
93pts James Suckling 93pts Halliday 92pts The Wine Front	#1 2018 Barossa Valley Grenache Huon Hooke 93pts Huon Hooke 93pts The Wine Front 90pts The Wine Advocate	94pts Halliday 92pts Wine Front 92pts James Suckling	94pts Halliday 91pts Wine Front 90pts Huon Hooke
2019	<p>93pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com A very fragrant, aromatic style with attractive, fresh red flowers and sappy, bunchy raspberries and boysenberries. The palate has a very complete, supple and smooth-honed feel with a seamless build of finely layered tannins. Drink now. Screw cap.</p> <p>93pts Halliday Wine Companion 2021 ‘Fermented with 30% whole bunches, matured in French oak, the best barrels selected for this wine. A fragrant bouquet and fresh red fruit palate. Counterintuitively, significant tannins add a dimension to the juicy fruit.’</p> <p>92pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Seems to have moved from the Barossa to McLaren Vale in 2019. Ripe raspberry, brown spice, subtle earthiness. It’s ripe and spicy, ripples with tannin and raspberry ripple, a bit of meatiness and minty perfume, slightly saline, plump and juicy finish. Rock solid. Good drinking here.</p>		
2018	<p>#1 2018 Barossa Valley Grenache Huon Hooke</p> <p>93pts Huon Hooke Medium to deep red/purple colour. The bouquet is redolent of rose petals, red cherries and raspberries, while the taste is intense and medium to full-bodied, with sweet fruit in the middle, penetrating depth and good persistence.</p> <p>93pts The Wine Front Giles Cooke MW, head man at Thistledown, is mad for Grenache. He’s a pretty good bloke too, considering you have to be wired a certain way to become a Master of Wine. Juicy Grenache, as is often the way in the Barossa Valley, but even-tempered and showing freshness, a lick of fine grained tannin, raspberry, spice and roses, a kind of redcurrant and cranberry crunch to the acidity, and a succulent red fruited finish tapered neatly by that fine tannin. It’s very good, and shows sensitivity in the winery too. Respect.</p> <p>90pts Nick Stock, The Wine Advocate Sourced from Adrian Hoffmann's holdings in the Ebenezer subregion, the 2018 Thorny Devil Grenache is a ruby-hued, medium-bodied expression of Grenache. It's not overly rich, instead offering charming cherry and dried-spice notes backed by slightly coarse-grained tannins on the finish.</p>		



THORNY DEVIL GRENACHE

2017

94pts James Halliday

Very impressive. Still has power at 14% alcohol, and a consequent clarity of flavor in a full red and blue spectrum. No cosmetics, nor Turkish Delight. Well made. Screwcap. To: 2027.

92pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

'Interesting to taste Barossa Grenache alongside McLaren Vale. Very different creatures. Poached strawberry, spice, bit of mint and herb, sappy, bright and finely etched tannin, raspberry succulence, saline and good on the finish, fresh mint and herby/ sour tang to close. Nice energy to the wine, I think.

92pts James Suckling

Bright and fresh with loads of orange peel, pink guava, peaches and fresh herbs. Medium body, a tight but spicy palate and a citrus soaked finish. Drink now. Screw cap.

90pts The Wine Advocate

Sourced from Adrian Hoffmann's holdings in the Ebenezer subregion, the 2018 Thorny Devil Grenache is a ruby-hued, medium-bodied expression of Grenache. It's not overly rich, instead offering charming cherry and dried-spice notes backed by slightly coarse-grained tannins on the finish.

2016

94pts James Halliday

Light, bright crimson; the inclusion of 9% grenache from McLaren Vale has worked very well, for there's a touch more structure and spine than many Barossa Valley grenaches at this price. The red fruits that are the heart and soul of this wine are delicious.

91pts Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front

Maybe the fruit flavour is a little sweet – we're into black jellybean and raspberry territory here – but the inlay of spice and gentle infusion of clovey oak is really quite beguiling. Add a general earthiness, excellent flow, and a convincing finish and you have yourself a most attractive wine.

90pts Huon Hooke

Deep red/purple colour. The aromas are of dark fruits, plums, minty blackberries and a lick of spice. It's bright, bold and simple, the palate lean and sinewy, with lots of fine powdery tannins and good fruit concentration. Very nice grenache.

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THE VAGABOND GRENACHE

2019	2018	2017	2016
96pts JamesSuckling.com 95pts Halliday 94pts The Real Review 94pts The Wine Front	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	Silver McLaren Vale Wine Show 2018 Silver Halliday Grenache Challenge 2018 96pts James Halliday 94pts Wine Front 92pts Huon Hooke	Gold Six Nations Wine Challenge 2017 94pts Halliday 93pts Huon Hooke 93pts Wine Anorak 92+pts Wine Front
2019	<p>96pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com This showcases the power of Blewitt Springs in a very boldly stated, fruit-driven expression of grenache with real purpose. The aromas are of redcurrants, raspberries, pomegranate and blood oranges and lead to a palate with a phenomenal drive of acidity and tannin. Such intense and defined style here. Drink or hold. Screw cap.</p> <p>95pts Halliday Wine Companion 2021 I adore this estate's obsession with grenache, quite possibly SA's saviour alongside a swag of Italian indigenes and mataro, especially in lieu of the warming planet, the variety's torrid Mediterranean mettle and the lack of natural structure in shiraz. A delicious full-bodied wine that seems, despite it all, barely mid-weighted. This is due to the maritime salinity, pointed acidity and fishbone tannins, etching the flow of fruit with a detailed edge that confers savouriness and a sense of freshness while corralling persimmon, pomegranate, fecund strawberry and cranberry scents. This is looser knit than the other top cuvees, but no less delicious.</p> <p>94pts Nick Butler, The Real Review Vibrant crimson-purple colour centre to rim. A very euro bouquet of cured meats, red licorice and stewed plums. Acidity speaks more of cooler climes - red cherries and raspberries. Oak and tannin are measured. Blue and red fruits carry the palate. Classy.</p> <p>94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Blewitt Springs. Creamy raspberry, rosy perfume and spice, maybe a bit of shoe leather and dried herb. It's silky, fresh, fine grip of tannin, mint and red fruits, but savoury in the background, with a coolness and vitality that makes it so charming, and good to drink. Some red fruit and sap to close. Yes.</p>		

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2018

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

From old Blewitt Springs' bush vines on deep sand, with some ironstone. Fermented using whole bunch, whole berry and crushed fruit, then aged in concrete eggs and oak. It has a lively, citrusy undertow and fine rub of sandpapery tannins to the fragrant red cherry and raspberry fruit. Violets, anise spice and fresh acidity make for a long, lifted finish.

95pts James Suckling

A great address for grenache, this stands out from the rest of the range for more pronounced acidity and tannin. The flowers, dried and fresh raspberries and wild herbal flurries on the nose lead to a palate that has a firm spine of tannin and fresh, blood-orange and raspberry flavors. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

95pts Huon Hooke

Deep red/purple colour. The bouquet is reserved and sweet, with herbal, green stem, Turkish Delight and fresh earth aromas. This is medium to full-bodied and quite firmly structured within the Grenache spectrum, a more structured style with length and firmness in the finish. Impressive stuff.

93+pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

It's fair to say the boys at Thistledown surely do love their Grenache. This one also Blewitt Springs. Sage and herb perfume, red frogs and raspberry, cinnamon spice. It's juicy and lively, light herbal flavour, gentle rasp of tannin, delicious flavour, slightly warm, but long on the finish, a bit of gravel and dried herb kicked up in its wake.

92pts The Wine Advocate

Sourced from two vineyards in Blewitt Springs and vinified in concrete eggs with 50% whole clusters, Thistledown's 2018 The Vagabond Old Vine Grenache features bright cherry, raspberry and red currant fruit. It's medium to full-bodied but taut and tart, with firm tannins and a long finish. It's a Grenache that could use a bit of time to settle down, then drink well for up to a decade.

2017

Silver Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2018

Silver Medal James Halliday Grenache Challenge, 2018

96pts James Halliday

From old bushvines at Blewitt Springs, matured in a concrete egg and French puncheons (10% new). Ah, take one look at the crystal clear crimson hue and you'll know the wine comes from old vines in McLaren Vale. What is truly remarkable is the way the wine has soaked up the new French oak without raising a sweat. This is lovely. Screwcap. 14.5% alc. To: 2037.

94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Old vines in Blewitt Springs. 200 dozen made. A bit of liquorice, raspberry, thyme, a little spice. Juicy, expressive and lively, dry and grainy tannin, freshness, good length, perfumed dried herb finish, and a dry one at that too. Fine Grenache here

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SHE'S ELECTRIC GRENACHE

2019	2018	2017
96pts JamesSuckling.com 96pts Halliday 95pts The Wine Front 92pts Huon Hooke	96pts & Great Value Halliday 94pts Decanter Magazine 93+pts The Wine Front 93pts James Suckling 91pts The Wine Advocate	Gold McLaren Vale Wine Show 2018 Gold Halliday Grenache Challenge 2018 95pts Halliday 93+pts The Wine Front
2019	<p>96pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com A super fragrant and floral rendition of this old-vine parcel from the Seaview district of the vale. It has aromas of poached strawberries and raspberries with a very seductive, whole-bunch (50%) influence. The palate has such impressive detail with a very pure and sleekly layered shape, mapped out with super fine, layered tannins. The red-berry, pomegranate and blood-orange flavors are deliciously fresh. Drink or hold. Screw cap.</p> <p>96pts & Great Value Award, Halliday Wine Companion 2021 Dry-grown on stingy soils in Seaview, manifest as abstemious yields. hand-picked with 50% whole bunch, ditto whole berries as the rest; all whacked into a gently extractive wild ferment, foot trodden. The tannic glean a reflection of everything prior and an ample post-ferment maceration. This smells like Turkish delight, tomato, wild raspberry, bergamot, sour cherry and something rocky. The tannins, sand-etched and beautifully detailed. A pliant density. 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 50% whole bunch. 675 bottles produced. She's Electric. Are Friends Electric? Electric Avenue. Together in Electric Dreams. Do I need The Mercy Seat? Perhaps. Light and frisky Grenache, layered with spice over cranberry and fresh raspberry, rose and mint perfume. It's energetic, light and 'Pinot-like', a little rasp of tannin, energy and tension, and a cool long finish that's just so appealing, you want to dip back in straight away. Bloody beautiful. Love this style of Grenache.</p> <p>92pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review Medium to full red colour with a good purple tint. Sweet raspberry, strawberry aromas, fresh and clean. The wine is light to medium-bodied and soft, gentle of texture, length is respectable and drinkability is high. A charming wine. Remarkable for its age, but how will it develop with time? (50% whole-bunches; 675 bottles produced)</p>	
2018	<p>Silver Medal Barossa Valley Wine Show 2019 96pts & Great Value James Halliday From a single, old dry-grown bushvine vineyard on the Seaview end of Chapel Hill Road. Hand-picked, 50% whole bunch, 50% whole berry, foot-trodden and hand-plunged, 6 days on skins post ferment. As pure as the driven snow multi-cherry and raspberry flavours, the mouthfeel supple, yet allows a span of flavours and textures to make fleeting appearances across the palate.</p>	

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94pts Decanter Magazine

93+ pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

"She's electric. She's in a family full of eccentrics." Well that takes me back to when I was living in England at the height of Britpop. Anyway, back then Australian Grenache was very much second fiddle to Shiraz, but no longer. Definitely maybe. Spice, red fruits, dried herb and floral perfume. Medium-bodied, certainly 'warm climate Pinot Noir' style here, delicate with a subtle earthiness, playful kitten's tongue tannin, balanced acidity, and a dry and firm finish of excellent length. Its best days are ahead of it.

93pts James Suckling

Attractive wild raspberries, delivered in very bright, attractive, fresh mode. The pastry-like tannins deliver a crunchy, vibrant style here. Drink now. Screw cap.

91pts The Wine Advocate

Thistledown's 2018 She's Electric Old Vine Single Vineyard Grenache comes from the Seaview subregion of McLaren Vale and was vinified with 50% whole clusters. Medium to full-bodied, it's taut and tart, with raspberry and cranberry fruit flavors and some dusty tannins on the finish. Give it another year or two in the cellar.

2017

Gold Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2018

Gold Medal James Halliday Grenache Challenge, 2018

95pts James Halliday

Dry grown bushvines, wild-fermented with 50% whole berries and 50% whole bunches, 6 days in postferment maceration, matured in French hogsheads (25% new). A fragrant and pure bouquet and palate, both sending the same message, are the starting point for this beautifully detailed wine. It's actually quite firm on the palate, but it comes from the fruit not tannins, so it can be missed. The length and finish reveal just how complex the wine is.



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SANDS OF TIME GRENACHE

2019	2018	2017
95+pts The Wine Front 95pts JamesSuckling.com	Winner, Top Gold, 97 Points James Halliday Grenache Challenge 2019 Gold McLaren Vale Wine Show 2019 96pts Sarah Ahmed 95pts James Halliday 95pts The Wine Front 94pts Huon Hooke 94pts James Suckling 93pts The Wine Advocate	Top 10 Australian Wines , Matthew Jukes Silver McLaren Vale Wine Show 2018 Silver Halliday Grenache Challenge 2018 96pts Halliday 96pts The Wine Front 93pts Huon Hooke
2019	95+pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front From 76 year old vines planted in Blewitt Springs, which is perhaps the epicentre for quality Grenache in this country. Bit of a loaded word of late though, is epicentre. A total of 930 bottles produced. Mine is 923. I was hoping for either 930, 007 or 001. Oh well. Medium-bodied, perfume and ripe raspberry, some biscuit spices and wholesome earthiness, almost like wet clay. It's carrying some puppy fat as a very young wine, succulence of raspberry, but there's bass and depth, kitten's tongue tannin, a smattering of dried herb (thyme and the like) and dried flowers on a long and gently, but insistently, tannic finish. Fantastic, and it feels like it will develop beautifully. 95pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com This is a wine that resonates in the way that old-vine wines sometimes do. Transcending the weight of fruit and the various aromas and flavors, it delivers x-factor presence. The bright red berries are tinged with wild herbs. Stone and forest-wood notes, too. The wine has a succulent, bright entry and then expands in all directions to really claim the palate in full, showing fine yet sinewy tannins, all juicy, defined and persistent. Fresh red-berry flavor holds long. Just needs a year or two to bed it all in. Drink or hold.	
2018	Winner, Top Gold, 97 Points James Halliday Grenache Challenge 2019 Gold Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show 2019 95pts James Halliday Wine Companion 2021 Dry-grown 80yo bushvines, fermented with 33% whole bunches, part in a concrete egg, matured in French puncheons (25% new). A rich grenache with superabundant blood plum fruit, and tannins to provide structure and longevity. 96pts Sarah Ahmed, Decanter From Sue Trott's 75-year-old Blewitt Springs' Home Block at 250m on deep sand. Terrific intensity and purity of fresh raspberry, blood orange and crunchier pomegranate, with subtle dried rose, sandalwood and five spice. Energetic, long, focused and mineral, with fine, pithy tannins. Whole bunch and whole berry layers were fermented in concrete. Aged 10 months in 500l French oak (20% new) and concrete egg; bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. 960 bottles.	

THISTLEDOWN WINE COMPANY



95+pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Blewitt Springs here. Like sands through the hourglass... Flat out beautiful Grenache. Raspberry, dried herb, rose oil, spice. Pure, glowing red fruits and juicy raspberry in particular, cool acidity, dusted with fine graphite tannin, pulls more savoury to close, and runs very long. Fabulous.

94pts Huon Hooke

Medium to deep red/purple colour with a savoury, dusty, nutty bouquet, which is less about primary sweet fruit than many Grenaches. the palate though, is lush and deep in fruit, although there is a nice balance between sweet primary fruit and savoury, drier flavours. It has elegance, richness and refined texture. A very smart Grenache indeed. Very long on the finish. It's a lovely drink now and should reward keeping too.

94pts James Suckling

A vibrant, complex and powerful grenache that is packed with aromas of brambly raspberries and spiced pastry. The palate has density and depth with terrific, red-fruit clarity. Drink or hold.

93pts The Wine Advocate

From 75-year-old vines in Blewitt Springs planted on sandy soils, the 2018 Sands of Time Old Vine Single Vineyard Grenache features boisterous notes of blueberries and cherries. Medium to full-bodied, it's spicy and peppery, with complex herbal notes that give an extra layer of complexity to this silky beauty.

2017**Top 100 Australian Wines 2019, Matthew Jukes**

It is a myth that serious Grenache needs somehow to become more and more macho, darker and oakier in order to justify its price. Headline grabbing and 100-point-score-munching Châteauneuf-du-Pape always seems to be so impenetrable it is impossible to drink. A growing band of winemakers and commentators understand that colour is irrelevant while assessing Grenache. Pale, ethereal beings can be surprisingly forceful and opinionated on the palate. Equally, new oak is not a pre-requisite for a great wine, quite the opposite. This rant brings me to Sands of Time, a remarkable wine from Sue Trott's Home Block vineyard in Blewitt Springs. It is hand-picked and vinified in concrete with loads of whole bunches layered in among the destemmed fruit to make a large, juicy, Grenache cake (its tastes as good as this image, too)! It then sees subtle oak for only ten months before being bottled. This is a transcendental Grenache which is made up of a vast collection of nuances, concepts, beliefs and suggestions bound together with a few decent dreams, random thoughts, a hunch or two and some propulsive ambition and it is delivered in liquid form for us all to admire.

Silver Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2018

Silver Medal James Halliday Grenache Challenge, 2018

96pts James Halliday

From 80 yo vines, matured in French puncheons (25% new). A high class wine begging to be given as long as possible before a blind tasting with Chateau Rayas et al. It has the power and depth to its red and blue fruits, tamed by oak, set to develop another leg or two over the next 20 years. Classy tannins. Great package.' Diam. 14.5% alc. To: 2037

THISTLEDOWN WINE COMPANY



96pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Giles Cooke MW and I held hands and sang "If I Could Turn Back Time" while we tasted this in the privacy of my home. Sadly I couldn't find my torn black tights to complete the scene. Anyway, this comes from Sue Trott's Home Block in the Blewitt Springs sub-region of McLaren Vale with a total production of 100 dozen. There's a touch of lift there to heighten the aromatics. Deep, throaty, dark red fruits, scrub herb perfume, spice and exotic things. Medium-bodied, fruity flavor of raspberry and cranberry, but dry and controlled too, plenty of grip, a bit of luxury, and a great finish. Spicy and crunchy to close. Saline. Feels long term to me. I've written 95 or 96 points, and either way, that's a pretty hefty score.

93pts Huon Hooke

'Youthful purple/red colour, medium depth, with a lovely fragrant aroma of raspberry pastille varietal fruit, bright and fresh, clean and pristinely fruit-driven. It's intense in the mouth, full-bodied and finishes with gently balanced tannin firmness. Delicious ripe-fruit sweetness. Superb wine.'



THIS CHARMING MAN GRENACHE

2019

97pts JamesSuckling.com
95pts The Wine Front
94pts Halliday Wine Companion

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

2019

97pts Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com

This is sourced from the Smart Vineyard, up on the ridge at Clarendon and has a very singular, powerful expression of raspberry and red-plum aromas, as well as some bracken and forest-wood notes. Very pure. The palate has a succulent feel with acidity that enlivens the rich, powerful, red-berry flavors.

95pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

From the Smart vineyard up in Clarendon. How many Grenache based wines can these lunatics at Thistledown make in any given year? Anyway, Johnny Marr produced one of the best, and most enduring guitar parts ever written for the song of the same name, made all the better because it was played on a Fender Telecaster.

How's the purity? Crisp and clear red fruit, mint and liquorice root perfume, a dusting of exotic spice. It's light and fresh, rings like a well struck triangle, fine emery board tannin, cool and calm, vanilla and juicy raspberry on a long and precise finish. Fine wine, no doubt.

94pts Halliday Wine Companion 2021

Wild-fermented with 20% whole bunches, matured in French puncheons (20% new). Full-bodied, and demanding time, but there's a power of varietal fruit to reward those with patience. The tannins are the key to a wine of character - and an undoubted future.

2018

Gold Medal McLaren Vale Wine Show, 2019

95pts Sarah Ahmed, Decanter

From a 71-year-old block of Smart Vineyard, Clarendon, at 260m on clay loam, quartz and ironstone. Beautiful saturation of slinky, fleshy red cherry fruit, with almond-edged cherry close to the stone, dried herbs and roses (Turkish Delight) and intriguing crushed oyster shell and graphite nuances. Undertones of sandalwood and earth lend savouriness. Long, very lithe, with silky tannins. Aged 12 months in French oak hogsheads (25% new).

95pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review

Medium to deep red/purple colour, the bouquet subtle and reserved but evoking raspberry and Turkish Delight. The wine is deliciously fruit-sweet and perfumed throughout the palate, medium to full in body and soft in tannins, with refinement, and a lovely lightness of touch. A tad more structure than the Sands of Time, perhaps. The flavour lingers superbly on the back-palate and finish, and it really brings a smile to the face"

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94pts James Suckling

A very vibrant nose with raspberry, boysenberry, red-plum and red-licorice aromas that lead to a quite fleshy, round and flavor-filled palate that finishes long and creamy. Drink or hold.

94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Grown on a hillside, not desolate. Well, Thistledown made a man of me trying to open this bugger. I had to borrow my son's Swiss Army Knife to cut through the stupid thick wax... Anyway, from the Smart vineyard in Clarendon. Raspberry, and then some more raspberry, rosy and musky perfume, baking spices. Medium-bodied, fleshy, ripe but slightly sticky tannin, ample fruit and perfume, a long finish with dried herb and raspberry in the aftertaste. More to come here.

92pts The Wine Advocate

Thistledown's 2018 The Charming Man Single Vineyard Grenache hails from Clarendon. From a vineyard planted in 1971 on iron stone and clay, this medium to full-bodied wine offers cedary notes (it was aged in one-fifth new oak) layered over black cherries. It's taut and firm, framed by fine-grained tannins, so give it until 2021, then drink it over the next 10 years.





THE CUNNING PLAN

SHIRAZ

2019	2018	2016
93pts JamesSuckling.com 92pts The Wine Front	92pts James Suckling 91pts The Wine Front 90pts Huon Hooke 90pts The Wine Advocate	94pts Halliday 90pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review
2019	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.	
	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.	
2018	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.	
	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.	
	90pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review Deep, glass-staining purple/red colour and a fresh, clean, ripe and attractive berry-like fruit aroma, which is not overly simplistic. The wine is full in the mouth and soft, rounded and rich, with lashings of black pepper, spices and red berries to taste. Just a whisker of bitterness, which is OK. A stylish wine.	
	90pts The Wine Advocate The 2018 Cunnig Plan Shiraz comes from a McLaren Flat vineyard and spent a year in 300-liter barrels. It features a nose of scorched cherries, mocha and cinnamon, a medium to full-bodied palate and some silky tannins on the softly dusty finish. Drink it over the next 5-6 years.	



THE QUICKENING SHIRAZ

2019

94pts The Wine Front
93pts JamesSuckling.com
92pts The Real Review

2018

93pts JamesSuckling.com
92pts The Wine Front

2019

94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Beheading an 'immortal' producers a burst of energy called a 'Quickenning'. Not to be confused with 'The Pentaveret', who run everything in the world, including the newspapers. Cool fragrance of dried flowers, sage and thyme, black fruit and spice. It's kind of juicy in the blackcurrant and blackberry department, with well-knit tannin giving a confident but gentle grip, fresh feel, and a long and subtly mentholated peppery finish. Very nice. You could well crave it fortnightly.

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.

92pts Huon Hooke, The Real Review

Deep, bold purple/red colour, with a lovely spicy, plummy, fragrance including various berries, the palate fleshy and supple, smooth and engaging, with delicious flavour and balance. Some cola and Campari nuances. Very soft, fleshy tannins give it a lovely silken texture.

2018

Silver Medal Barossa Valley Wine Show 2019

93pts James Halliday

86% Barossa Valley shiraz, 14% Blewitt Springs grenache, not a s, the grenache acting to soften the somewhat rugged shiraz. The end result is a medium to full-bodied red, which will undoubtedly repay cellaring.

93pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Blackberry, raspberry, brown sauce and spices, a little mint, almost rosy perfume. A medium-bodied affair showing a light touch in the winery, a certain succulence with a savoury dried herb edge, plush fat tannin, sage and perfume on a good long finish. Very nicely done.

93pts The Wine Advocate

Thistledown's 2018 The Quickenning Shiraz comes from Eden Valley (75%) and Ebenezer (25%). The blueberries and spice of Eden Valley dominate, but the edges are rounded out by the plushness of the Ebenezer fruit. It's medium to full-bodied, silky and rich, with hints of caramel and cedar on the long, mouthwatering finish.

92pts James Suckling

Intense, rich red-plum and raspberry aromas with gently flinty, stony notes. The palate has a smooth array of fine, fresh and vibrant tannins that carry plenty of red-plum and raspberry flavor. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

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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.		

THISTLEDOWN WINE COMPANY



SILKEN BEASTIE SHIRAZ

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.

THISTLEDOWN WINE COMPANY



BACHELOR'S BLOCK SHIRAZ

2018	2017	2016	2015
95pts The Wine Advocate 95pts Halliday	96pts & Great Value Halliday 94pts The Wine Front 92pts James Suckling	97pts Halliday 93+pts The Wine Front	94pts Halliday 93+pts The Wine Front 91pts Huon Hooke
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>		
2017	<p>96pts & Great Value, James Halliday Hand-picked, wild-fermented with 40% whole bunches, 60% whole berries, 5 days on skins, matured for 18 months in French hogsheads (50% new). A very complex, yet complete, medium to full-bodied shiraz with abundant plum and blackberry fruit threaded with ribbons of spice and positive tannins.</p> <p>94pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front Single vineyard from Ebenezer. Bachy! Dark fruit, mocha, sage and mint. Full-bodied, dense graphite tannin, bold fruit, but retains a sense of coolness and 'minerality', perfume and coal, flows along beautifully and finishes long. A fair bit of class here, not least from a tricky vintage.</p> <p>92pts James Suckling There's a very rich feel here with assertive red plums and nicely cut tannins that carry plenty of fresh, punchy red-fruit flavor. Drink or hold.</p>		
2016	<p>97pts James Halliday Deluxe packaging is the start, the vinification precisely reflected in the dark berries of the bouquet and the supple, medium-bodied palate. By both whole-bunch/ berry fermentation and French oak maturation, the tannins are relegated to the sidelines and told to keep quiet. An opulent wine in opulent packaging – no expense spared.' Cork. 14.5% alc. To: 2046.</p> <p>93+ pts Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front It's earthen and coal-like with rounds of plum-soaked fruit. Oak adds polish and a creaminess to the texture, but not a lot in flavour terms; thankfully. It's a coherent wine, every aspect on the same page. Tangy, earthen, loganberry-like notes contribute energy and interest. It's a smart wine. Every detail has been examined and then placed with care.</p>		

THISTLEDOWN WINE COMPANY



BACHELOR'S BLOCK SHIRAZ

2015

94pts James Halliday

A natural yeast fermentation which included 40% whole bunches before spending 20 months in 300l French barrels were the recipe for this very well put together Barossa shiraz. Red and black fruits, some olive tapenade and with the whole bunch element nicely integrated, this concentrated, medium to full bodied wine is light on its feet at the same time.

93+pts Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front

"Bachelor of Bachelor's, it's a beauty. Barossa shiraz in full strut. Coal-like, earthen, blackberried, coffeed. Drenched in dark fruit, clipped by smoky oak and that savoury/earthen/brooding character the best Barossa shiraz often boasts. Tannin helps pull the flavours out through the finish. There's a warmth here but it's not distracting, or intrusive. Quality here is 'up there'.

91pts Huon Hooke

Deep red colour with a good purple tint. The bouquet is sweetly ripe berry fruits, with a subtle earthy and sooty overtone. It's soft and rounded with a glycerol-like sweetness and slipperiness. It's full-bodied and smooth-textured, fairly straightforward but has time on its side. The tannins are gentle and supple. Lovely sweet core of fruit, soft enough to enjoy young - but it will also reward cellaring.

THISTLEDOWN WINE COMPANY



ADVANCE RELEASE MATTSCHOSS GRENACHE

2019

97pts & Great Value Award, Halliday Wine Companion

An amalgam of quartz, sandy loams and ironstone soils; young dry-grown vines, propitiously sited at 550m and articulated across a wild yeast fermentation, incorporating 22% whole-bunch. And versed winemaking nouse. Only 720 bottles made, this is exceptional. Up there with the very finest that this country crafts. Kirsch, sandalwood, pomegranate, wood smoke, clove and the rasp of real tannic mettle. This flows long, with an attractive brittle weave for savouriness and the next glass. The alcohol sits right for this late ripener.

95+pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

Grapes from Mengler's Hill in the Eden Valley. 720 bottles produced from seven (7!) year old vines. In the last decade or so, there's no question that Grenache has been the 'most improved' on ground. Raspberry, violet, fresh mint, spice and clarity. Wonderful transmission of site, kitten's tongue tannin, almost a playful lick, sage and rose, finesse and superb length, spice and stony things trailing in the wake of Grenache perfume. Truly wonderful.

95pts Nick Butler, The Real Review

Translucent crimson red colour with brown edges. Looks as if it's seen some air through winemaking. Purple and red berries, bunchy sinew, juicy and open knit. An intense wine, with an elevated acid line. Quality fruit. Beautifully made.



ADVANCE RELEASE ROGERS ROAD ROUSSANNE

2018

92pts Huon Hooke

Medium yellow, bright colour, with a nutty, seasoned-barrel fermented bouquet and a tinge of spice. Creamy lees notes, too. The wine is fuller and richer on the tongue, rounded and ample, with generosity and style. The finish is dry, lingering and very satisfying. Very good, if slightly oaky. Probably better in a year, when the oak might have receded a touch. 660 bottles made.

THISTLEDOWN WINE COMPANY



ADVANCE RELEASE MORITZ ROAD GRENACHE

2018

96pts & Great Value, James Halliday

Dry-grown bushvines, wild-fermented with 20% whole bunches, matured in used French hogsheads, hand-bottled, all 400. Beautiful crimson-purple hue; highly expressive bouquet of red and purple fruits sets the scene for the rich palate, which is likewise redolent of high quality grenache, almost painful in their intensity.

95pts Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

378 bottles made from 50 year old vines in Blewitt Springs, planted on Maslin sands, more commonly associated with nude tunnel ball and the like. And on that note, we conclude what's perhaps been the most Grenache-laden month in the history of The Wine Front. Sage and spice, cherry and raspberry, subtle earthiness. It's deep and flavoursome, concentrated and firm in tannin, juicy and savoury, vivid and very long. The volume of flavour here, delivered with structure and style, is quite something.



ADVANCE RELEASE MATTSCHOSS SHIRAZ

2018

94pts James Halliday

Wild-fermented with 25% whole bunches, matured in French hogsheads. Dense purple-red; notwithstanding its extreme youth, this full-bodied shiraz has inherent balance between the fruit, oak and tannins. Watch this space.

93pts Huon Hooke

Deep purple colour that stains the glass. Very fresh, raw, infant aromas which express bold, ripe, clean berry fruits - spicy and plummy. A bold, lavish mouthful of wine, deliciously supple and easy to drink at this tender age. Lovely wine and I'd like to see how it develops with age. (only 400 bottles made, from the Mattchoss vineyard.)

92pts The Wine Advocate

There are only 400 bottles of the 2018 Advance Release Mattschoss Shiraz from the Eden Valley. It's a savory offering, with notes of black olive and asphalt over blueberries. Medium to full-bodied on the palate, it's taut in feel, with crisp acids and silky tannins. An impressive wine from vines that are only nine years old, it should drink well for a decade.