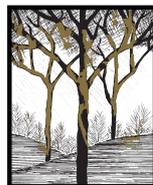


eRobertParker.com
#204, DEC 2012
BY LISA PERROTTI-BROWN



T O R B R E C K

I've spoken a lot about the 2011 vintage in regional specific reports, but to briefly recap: there was a lot of rain and flooding on the eastern half of Australia with South Australia (e.g. Barossa and Riverland) and Victoria (e.g. Yarra Valley and Heathcote) taking the brunt of the storm effects.

Pockets such as the Hunter Valley and McLaren Vale got off relatively lightly and there are some great 2011 wines coming out of these regions. Otherwise the exemplary efforts of a few growers and winemakers in the worst hit areas yielded some very palatable results. Western Australia (e.g. Margaret River) was completely unaffected and produced some crackers in 2011. So in short 2011 yielded some wines of extraordinary value and, unfortunately, some wines of extraordinarily poor quality.

My advice is: take some advice before you buy this vintage. But don't let uncertainty put you off there are some rip-snorting 2011 stunners out there of INCREDIBLE value.

TORBRECK'S 2011 WOODCUTTER'S SHIRAZ SPRINGS TO MIND – A LOT OF HAND SORTED, DECLASSIFIED OLD-VINE FRUIT IS IN THIS MODESTLY PRICED GEM (NONE OF THE TOP WINES INCLUDING RUNRIG WAS PRODUCED IN 2011) AND THIS WINE IS A TESTAMENT TO WINEMAKER INTEGRITY AND THE AWESOME VALUE THAT CAN BE HAD FROM THESE DIFFICULT VINTAGES.

Torbreck was by no means the only South Australian winery to get 2011 just right. In fact, the very finest and best value 2011 Barossa, Eden, Clare and McLaren Vale Shirazes and Grenaches are going to blow consumers' minds. The wines are medium-bodied, delicate, spicy, peppery and perfumed – and they will challenge your preconceptions about Australian Shiraz.

Tasting a 2011 Shiraz with one major Barossa winemaker I exclaimed, "Wow – can you do this again?" While I thought the guy was going to hit me at first considering all the hardship he went through to make that wine, he could see I was dead serious: biggest isn't always best. So I see a cloud with a silver lining in the 2011 vintage – it took South Australia producers to the elegant edge of ripeness and revealed the very exciting possibilities.

LISA PERROTTI-BROWN



2011 WOODCUTTERS RED

RATING: 91
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: A Proprietary Blend
DRINK: 2012 - 2018

The 2011 Woodcutters Shiraz doesn't miss a beat in this difficult vintage. Deep garnet-purple colored, it is scented of cassis, black plums and macerated blackberries over nuances of charcoal, black pepper, smoked duck breast and violets. Full-bodied and packed with black berry and savory meat and mineral flavors, it is nicely poised in the mouth with a taut backbone of medium level rounded tannins and just enough acid, finishing with a good persistence of pepper and spice notes. Drink this one now to 2018+.

2001 WOODCUTTERS RED

RATING: 90
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: A Proprietary Blend
DRINK: 2012

Pale to medium garnet-brick colored, the 2001 Woodcutters Shiraz offers notes of sandalwood, spice box, dried Chinese plums and a whiff of lavender sachets. Medium-bodied, elegant and with layers of evolved dark fruit flavors, it has a suggestion of remaining powdery tannins and a long spicy finish. It's mature / at its peak and good for drinking now.

90



2011 CUVEE JUVENILES

RATING: 90
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: A Proprietary Blend
DRINK: 2012 - 2016

Torbreck's 2011 Cuvée Juveniles presents a medium garnet-purple color and vibrant aromas of raspberry preserves, kirsch, black and white pepper and smoked bacon with just a hint of damp loam. Full-bodied with plenty of juicy red berry preserve flavors, it has a medium level of silky tannins, refreshing acid acidity and a long peppery finish. Delicious now, it should keep to 2016+.

88



2012 WOODCUTTERS WHITE

RATING: 88
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: Semillon
DRINK: 2012 - 2015

The 2012 Woodcutter's Semillon displays expressive lemon and fresh apple notes with a suggestion of cut herbs and a whiff of yeastiness. Light to medium-bodied, dry, clean and crisp in the mouth, it offers a good concentration of citrusy fruit and a long refreshing finish. Drink it now to 2015.



2011 WOODCUTTERS RVM

RATING: 88+
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: A Proprietary Blend
DRINK: 2012 - 2015

A Roussanne, Viognier, Marsanne blend, the 2011 Woodcutters RVM yields subtle floral notes over a core of fresh pears and white peaches. Dry, light to medium-bodied an elegantly fruited of honeyed peach in the mouth, it finishes with gentle medium to long persistence. I recently tasted a 2001 vintage representing Powell's early offering of this style (which is also represented by the upper level "Steading Blanc" label) and it is aging beautifully, so I'd say there's no rush to drink and it should cellar to at least 2015+.

88+

2012 THE BOTHIE

RATING: 88
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: Muscat
DRINK: 2012 - 2012

The 2012 The Bothie has pretty grape and ripe peach aromas with some floral notes of honeysuckle and orange blossom. Very sweet, forward and well balanced on the medium to full-bodied palate, it gives a long spicy / ginger laced finish. Drink it now.

88



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