

2019 Slate Shiraz

Review Summary

Aaron Brasher

95 points

Fabulously deep, vibrant and very youthful in the glass, inky and opaque. Deep, dark and brooding aromatics of dark cherry, dark chocolate, satsuma plums, graphite and a touch of spice: really evocative. The palate is all black fruits, with a plushness and juiciness to it, but there's ample palate defining tannins and acid that keep the powerfully opulent, decadent fruit in check.

James Suckling

96 points

A great follow-up to the 2018, this has attractively ripe and fresh dark berries, as well as a dark graphite-like note, some pepper and cocoa powder. The palate has a resolved and finely textured quality. Quite fine-grained tannins here, very smoothly rendered and detailed. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

International Wine Challenge

95 points - GOLD

Black cherry fruits, aniseed and baked plum tart. Hints of roast meats. plushy and cool with some tarry earthy undertones. Classic McLaren Vale.

Matthew Jukes

19+/20

If you take every word that I have written in the 2018 vintage note for slate and swap out the Bandol reference for Cornas from Allemande you will see, once again, that this statesmanlike 2019 Slate Shiraz has nailed it again. If anything, this vintage contains even more potential and even deeper wells of thrilling fruit. There are coffee notes, hung game hints, dark chocolate and tar references, but these are filigree details to the all-pervasive, omnipotent Shiraz fruit. Once again, this is not a big wine. This is important to underline. It is a medium weight fellow with mind-bending purity and intensity and this is what makes it so unforgettable and also desirable.

Jeni Port**93 points**

A little slice of history here. This McLaren Vale shiraz was fermented in an old, open slate fermenter in the historic Tintara winery built in 1863 with slate mined from the nearby Willunga Hills. The Tintara fermenters were reportedly last used in 1927! Wax-lined slate and concrete fermenters are finding renewed favour with many Aussie winemakers. They are excellent for stabilising temperature during fermentation and, being porous, they can contribute texture to a wine. Ox Hardy Slate Shiraz reveals a lovely seamless quality and, yes, there's plenty of texture here. Deep, dense garnet red. Concentrated perfume redolent of violets, dried herbs, black fruits and earth. There's an open and generous Vale quality to the wine. Eighteen months maturation in seasoned French oak shows thoughtful winemaking, choosing to make the fruit the focus and allowing the wine its vitality and youth but with the promise to age nicely. I was particularly taken by an almost exotic savoury note – kind of pomegranate, kind of Mediterranean spice – that peeks through. This wine has energy to burn.

Ray Jordan**94 points**

An interesting feature of this excellent wine is the use of old slate fermenters that haven't been used in years. They appear to have worked rather well. Perfumed plummy fruit notes with a trace of liqueur chocolate and spice. The palate is soft and supple with a rich succulent character of ripe black and red fruits. It's had 16 months in French oak. The balance is spot on and the finish long. Cracking good wine. Cellar to 15 years.

Steve Leszczynski**95 points**

Nectar. An absolutely sublime McLaren Vale Shiraz dripping in history. There's an excellent story that goes with it too. The Upper Tintara Winery was established in 1863. All that remains are five open fermenters crafted from locally mined slate at the nearby Delabole quarry in Willunga Hills. These have gone unused for almost a century seeing their last vintage in 1927 - until now. Andrew Hardy has resurrected these fermenters as a wonderful nod to the district's history. This Shiraz sees older French oak for 18 months. A basket full of dark berry fruit moves with dark plums and dripping in silky dark chocolate. Fine spices add some warmth and are flanked by aniseed. The depth is the clincher. Dusty edges are bound powdery like tannins. A wine that is long, persistent and slides down with absolute ease. Sheer class and then some. Drink to 10 years +

Campbell Mattinson

95 points

This steps things up a bit. It's the extra length that does it. It's a ripe, semi-rustic turn at shiraz, with bitumen and plum flavours doing most of the lifting, but the finish reaches so very far and beyond that, by the end of it all, you've noticed the extra dimensions added by various florals and dry, rusty spice notes. It's a wine of layers and length. It's top notch. Drink 2021 - 2030+

Annette Lacey MW

90 points

'Slate' is a nod to the open fermenters used at the winery made from local slate in the late 1800's. A big purple dense wine with a meaty ferrous note. Oak notes of vanilla and brown spice are supported by minty, ripe black plums, blackberry conserve and a raisin note. This is a teeth stainer, a mouth-filling and intense wine, with chewy tannins and a solid masculine structure. The fruit has a freshness that is appreciated and the wine is well thought out, as all this concentration and intensity is in balance. This is for those that like their wines full bodied and packed with fruit and tannins. Extra time in the bottle would see the tannins soften, but can still be drunk now with a vigorous decant.