Australian Wine

VARIETY

SHIRAZ AND BLENDS

Guide



AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED

AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED

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Australian Wine

SHIRAZ AND BLENDS



AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED



Crafted from grapes grown under vast and diverse climates, across landscapes millions of years in the making, every glass of Australian wine tells a story.

Like those who came before us, our modern growers and makers continue to be passionate, resilient and creative; constantly driven to explore new ways to perfect old techniques. Our community is connected by a mutual respect and shared love of crafting exceptional wine, while protecting the natural wonders for future generations to enjoy. Applying modern thinking to our ancient lands, we take playful experimentation very, very seriously.

So, if you're looking for the taste of adventure, let Australian wine be your compass. Because in every bottle of Australian wine, you'll experience the wonders of Australia – a reminder of the adventure and diversity that defines our culture and our land.

SHIRAZ

THE STORY OF AN AUSTRALIAN LEGEND

- Shiraz is one of Australia's most established and loved varieties
- Grown by 4 out of 5 wineries
- Represents nearly half of planted red grapes
- Nearly 1/4 of total wine production.

You say Syrah, we say Shiraz

This variety is called Syrah almost everywhere else in the world. However, due to its commercial success internationally, Australian producers have chosen to label their own wine "Shiraz".



LOOP VIDEO
Now is a great time to play the Shiraz loop video in the background, as you welcome people into your class.

FIRST TASTE – This may be a good opportunity to give everyone a taste of a classic Australian Shiraz. The full tasting comes later in the module.

SHIRAZ: THE STORY OF AN AUSTRALIAN LEGEND

When it comes to Australian wine no other grape is more synonymous than Shiraz. Almost universally planted, capable of everything from affordable, quaffable BBQ reds to magnificent, age-worthy classics that are truly world-class, Shiraz has it all.

Shiraz thrives in Australia's warm climate and various soil types, and wine drinkers love the taste of this juicy-ripe red that's packed with fruit flavours, texture and seamless balance.

- Shiraz was one of the original varieties planted in Australia and instantly flourished in its warm, dry climate.
- Shiraz's journey from its early days as a blend component to single variety can, in part, be attributed to the consistent nature of the wines – full-bodied with bold, upfront, dark blackberry and plum fruit, most often made with oak – toasted American oak for vanilla characters or French oak for subtler cedar notes.
- Shiraz is grown in 60 of 65 Australian wine regions.

- Australia boasts some of the oldest pre-phylloxera Shiraz vines in the world. Ironically, French wine researchers and winemakers now travel to Australia to source vine material to take back to France, which is one of the original sources of Australia's Shiraz vines.
- As well as single-variety Shiraz, Australian wineries produce Grenache, Shiraz, Mataro (Mourvèdre) blends, better known as GSM, and Shiraz Cabernet blends, a uniquely Australian style.
- Australia adopted the name Shiraz in place of its French name Syrah in the 19th century.

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DID YOU KNOW

You say Syrah, we say Shiraz. Australia adopted the name Shiraz in the mid-19th century. This variety is called Syrah almost everywhere else in the world, but due to its enormous commercial success on the international market, producers from Australia have chosen to label their own wine "Shiraz". Exactly how Syrah became Shiraz remains somewhat of a mystery. Some say it's because the original cuttings were incorrectly labelled, others say it's simply the strong Australian accent...

Some Australian winemakers have recently endeavoured to produce medium-bodied wines more European in style, choosing to label them Syrah to differentiate them from richer, fuller-bodied Shiraz styles.



TODAY WE'LL COVER

- The history of Australian Shiraz
- How it's grown
- How it's made
- The different styles
- Where it's grown
- Characteristics and flavour profiles

THE HISTORY OF SHIRAZ IN AUSTRALIA



1820s – 1830s
Shiraz is one of the original varieties brought to Australia and thrives in the warm, dry climate.

1840s – 1890s
Shiraz vines are planted in South Australia and Victoria, with some of these vines still producing fruit today.

1860
Tahbilk is established in Victoria and is home to some of the world's oldest ungrafted, pre-phylloxera plantings of Shiraz.

THE HISTORY OF SHIRAZ IN AUSTRALIA

1820s–1830s

While the exact origins of Australia's first Shiraz vines are subject to debate, we know they arrived as humble vine cuttings in the early 1800s, including cuttings from France's Rhône region.

Shiraz made its way from New South Wales to other winemaking regions of Australia, or arrived with people moving to Australia bringing vine cuttings. It soon became clear that Shiraz thrived in the diverse range of climates in Australia. The first wines to come from Shiraz cuttings were labelled Hermitage and sometimes Claret or Burgundy, by bin numbers or with generic, non-varietal descriptions.

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DID YOU KNOW

Early cuttings were often labelled Hermitage after the renowned French wine AOC, seen by some as the spiritual home of Shiraz.

1840s–1890s

Shiraz vines were planted in regions like the Hunter Valley, Barossa, McLaren Vale, and Nagambie Lakes and Great Western in Victoria. Some of the vines are still producing fruit today and represent the world's oldest continuously producing Shiraz vines.

Christian Auricht migrated to Australia from Prussia in 1830s. He established one of the Barossa's first trading villages – named Langmeil – on the bank of the North Para River. This historic site is now home to Langmeil Winery and their 'Freedom' vineyard, which they claim was planted as part of his mixed farm in 1843.

Early 1900s
Shiraz continues to prosper in almost every corner of the country, with its suitability to Australia's various climates, topography and soils superseding other varieties.

1980s – 1990s
Australia's winemakers craft wines with deeper colour, higher alcohol levels and new oak maturation.

1867
Henry Best plants Shiraz in his Great Western vineyard in Victoria, and these vines continue to thrive today

1950s – 1970s
Shiraz makes its move to become the most popular wine in the country.



1860
Tahbilk was established in Victoria's Nagambie Lakes region. Shiraz was planted and survives to this day with the Tahbilk's '1860s Vines' Shiraz crafted from these grapes.

Australian producers adopted the name Shiraz in the mid-19th century and soon popularised it as an internationally accepted term for the variety.

1867
Henry Best planted Shiraz and other varieties in his Great Western vineyard in Victoria. These vines continue to thrive today, producing outstanding-quality Shiraz for Best's 'Thomson Family' Shiraz.

Early 1900s
Shiraz continued to prosper in almost every corner of the country, with its suitability for table and fortified wine in Australia's various climates, topography and soils superseding other varieties.

However it wasn't until the mid-to-late 1900s that single-variety labelled Shiraz wines, or those featuring a high proportion of Shiraz, began to make their way into the glasses of Australians – and international drinkers through an emerging export market.

1950s–1970s
Shiraz made its move to become the most popular wine in the country.

When official measures of grape crush were recorded in the 1950s, Grenache held the highest red grape crush number with 21,200 tonnes, while Shiraz took second place with 12,400 tonnes. But by 1976, as the red wine boom began to gain momentum, Shiraz usurped Grenache with a crush figure of 72,200 tonnes.

1980s–1990s
Australian Shiraz found favour with its approachability and full-flavoured fruit. The affordable, commercially produced Shiraz was often sold with quirky, colourful labels. The Shiraz export boom took hold with the popularity of Australian Shiraz soaring in international markets, including the US.

In the United States, consumers were guided by one of the world's most influential wine voices, Robert Parker Jr. of Wine Advocate. Parker praised the intensely bold flavours and characters of Australian Shiraz, awarding 100-point scores to wines such as Penfolds Grange.

TODAY
The reputation of cool-climate Shiraz grows, standing proudly alongside traditional, rich, full-bodied warm-climate styles of Australian Shiraz that are enjoyed all over the world.

2000s
While blockbuster Shiraz is still being made, with inky depth and syrupy richness, tastes are increasingly appeased by more moderate styles.



High Parker scores were regularly given to Australian wines made from riper fruit, deep in colour, high in alcohol and matured in toasted new oak. These wines were extremely popular, often commanding premium prices. But consumer preferences eventually began to shift towards lighter-bodied, restrained examples.

2000s

Everyday-drinking Shiraz were led by the 'critter wine' movement, heralded by Casella Wines' Yellow Tail label, which became a huge export success. As a result, plantings of Shiraz rose substantially.

While blockbuster Shiraz was still being made, with inky depth and syrupy richness, tastes were increasingly appeased by a more moderate, easy-to-enjoy style.

In response to the boom of the late 20th century, the market shifted slightly, encouraging Australian winemakers to craft more moderately flavoured and textured Shiraz styles.

Today

Cool-climate Shiraz began to build a reputation as one of Australia's finest wines, standing proudly alongside traditional, rich, warm-climate styles of Australian Shiraz that were already enjoyed all over the world.

Today, Shiraz leads the charge as the country's most widely planted variety, positioning Australia as a world-class producer with its cool-climate expressions that allow regional distinction and varietal purity to be revealed, as well as fine examples of big-flavoured richer, riper styles from warmer regions.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINT

- What is the benefit of producing Shiraz from old vine material?

THE STORY OF MAX SCHUBERT

THE EVOLUTION OF AN ICON

- In 1951, Max Schubert set out to make the "Great Australian Red", but was ordered to cease production by Penfolds management
- In 1960, Penfolds Grange Bin 1 hit the market to great critical acclaim, and Penfolds ordered Schubert to resume production
- Penfolds Grange has become one of the world's most iconic, collected and revered wines, largely thanks to the American wine media and critics such as Robert Parker and Wine Spectator



COMPLEMENTARY READING

The Story of Max Schubert and Grange: The evolution of an icon

Max Schubert was a pioneer. He set out to put Australian Shiraz on the world map, and despite being thwarted along the way, he succeeded by producing Australia's most famous wine, Penfolds Grange.

The history of Australia's Shiraz success can be attributed to the efforts of a visionary winemaker, Max Schubert. In 1951, inspired by a visit to Bordeaux, Schubert set out to make the "Great Australian Red", combining traditional Australian techniques, inspiration from Europe and precise winemaking practices. His aim was to create an Australian wine "capable of staying alive for a minimum of 20 years and comparable with those produced in Bordeaux...". But, as the varieties that make up the red wines of Bordeaux (Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Malbec) were all in very short supply in Australia, he decided the wine would be made from the more readily available Shiraz. He also developed a revolutionary technique by maturing his Shiraz in new American oak casks.

When he presented the wines to Penfolds management seven years later, he was ordered to cease production. But Schubert continued his work in secret, hidden in the cellars of Magill Estate in South Australia.

In 1960, a new wine, Penfolds Grange Bin 1, hit the market to great critical acclaim and instant commercial success. With renewed confidence, Penfolds head office ordered Schubert to resume production of this groundbreaking wine. They discovered he hadn't missed a vintage, and Penfolds subsequently released the 1952 vintage to the public.

Penfolds Grange has become one of the world's most iconic, collected and revered wines, and proudly carries the mantle of "Australia's Greatest". Penfolds Grange is still made predominantly with Shiraz, with most vintages including a small percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon.

THE STORY OF
MAX SCHUBERT

THE EVOLUTION OF AN ICON

Shiraz: Just what the doctor ordered

Many of Australia's early wine promoters were doctors, among them Dr Christopher Rawson Penfold, who arrived in Adelaide in 1844 and established Magill Estate. Penfolds' first wines were available on prescription, thought to be of benefit to anaemic patients.





VITICULTURE

HOW SHIRAZ IS GROWN

- The Vine
- Irrigation
- Pruning
- Yield
- Harvest

THE VINE

Vigorous, adaptable vine that can yield large quantities of grapes on a single vine, even in low-fertile soils.



THE VINE

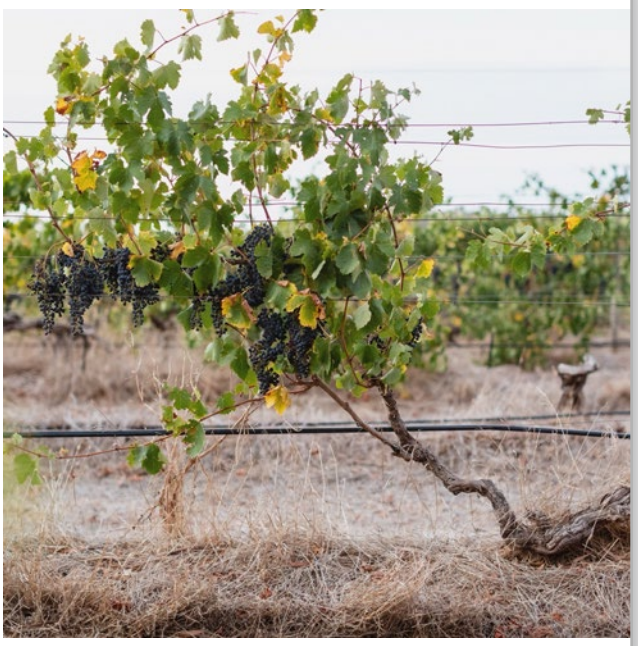
Shiraz is a vigorous vine and can yield large quantities of grapes on a single vine, even in low-fertile soils (typically higher-quality wines come from lower-yielding vines).

The Shiraz vine is relatively adaptable. It can be a prolific grower in the right climate, but is sensitive to poor fruit setting. Shiraz is mid-to-late budding and ripening, picked mid-harvest. Attention must be given to rootstock because it's sensitive to chlorosis (parts of the foliage turn yellow due to lack of chlorophyll). If left on the vine too long, Shiraz has a tendency to lose aroma and acidity quickly, and the resulting wine can taste jammy.

Shiraz grape bunches need to be protected from excessive heat and sunlight load as these conditions increase the likelihood of water loss and berry shrivel. When this happens, the grapes ripen too quickly, and the resulting wines can develop a cloying jamminess with a flabby mouthfeel.

IRRIGATION

- Vines on shallow soil require irrigation, while old vines are largely dry-grown
- Shiraz vines can cope in adverse conditions
- If irrigated too generously, wines can lack flavour concentration



IRRIGATION

Shiraz vineyards on shallow soils require irrigation, whereas many old vineyards, or those on deeper soils, are dry-grown, so the vines access water from sources deep below the surface. Shiraz vines, especially hardy dry-grown vines and those with age, can cope well in adverse conditions, and as a result produce grapes with rich fruit concentration and intensity. If Shiraz is irrigated too generously, it can become too vigorous and produce wines that lack flavour concentration.

PRUNING

Especially important to control excessive growth. A variety of canopy management techniques can be used to ensure the canopy is balanced and the fruit zone is appropriately shaded, avoiding sunburn and excessive ripeness.



PRUNING

One of the main purposes of pruning is to ‘tell’ the vine how many bunches of grapes to grow. This is achieved by diverting energy growth to the right place. Given Shiraz is a vigorous vine, pruning is especially important to control excessive growth. A variety of canopy management techniques can also be used to ensure the canopy is balanced and the fruit zone is appropriately shaded, avoiding sunburn and excessive ripeness. Shiraz pruning can be done by hand or mechanically, typically during the winter months or closer to spring.

YIELD

Dependent on several factors, including:

- Age of vine
- Vine vigour
- Site characteristics



YIELD

The yield of Shiraz vines is dependent on several factors, including:

- **Age of vine:** The yield of old Shiraz vines tends to be lower, but the grapes are very concentrated in flavour and intensity.
- **Vine vigour:** If vineyard growth is especially abundant and the yield is allowed to rise, Shiraz's distinctive savoury qualities can diminish, so maintaining a keen eye on the vines' growth is an important part of the viticultural practice.
- **Site characteristics:** Including soil type, aspect, light sources and climate.

HARVEST

Shiraz demands a good ripening season. As grapes ripen, sugar content increases and acid content decreases. The key to an ideal harvest is to find the point when sugar-acid balance is just right.



HARVEST

Harvest timing and maturity of fruit are both informed by the wine's intended style and climate. To ripen fully, Shiraz demands a good ripening season, and in those conditions it's picked mid-harvest.

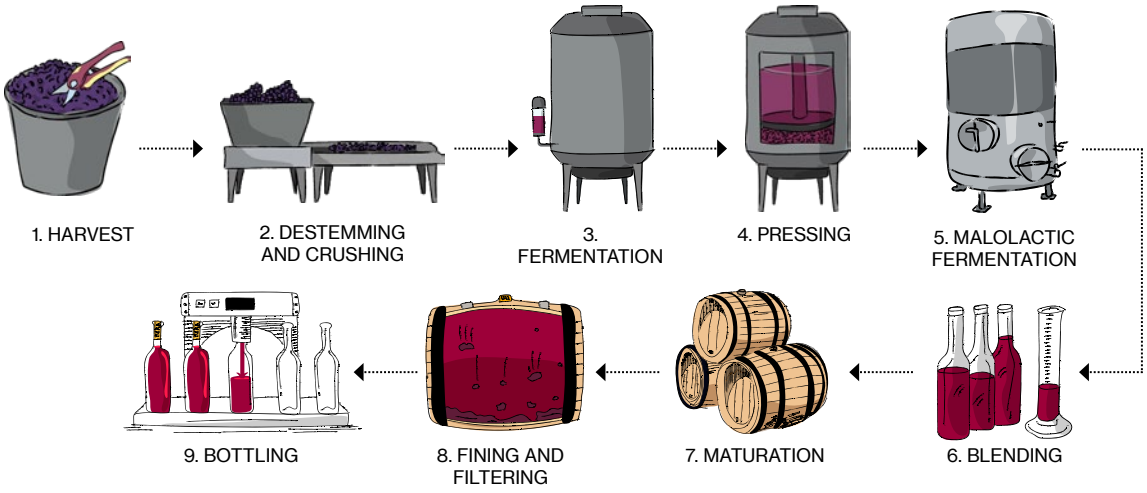
In cooler climates, Shiraz often requires a longer growing season to ripen completely. As the grapes ripen, the sugar content increases and the acid content decreases, so the key to an ideal harvest is to find the point when the sugar-acid balance is just right.

Left to ripen more deeply, Shiraz's peppery qualities develop into notes of stewed plums and dark cherry.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINT

- How does the time of harvest affect the flavour nuances in Shiraz?

HOW RED WINE IS MADE



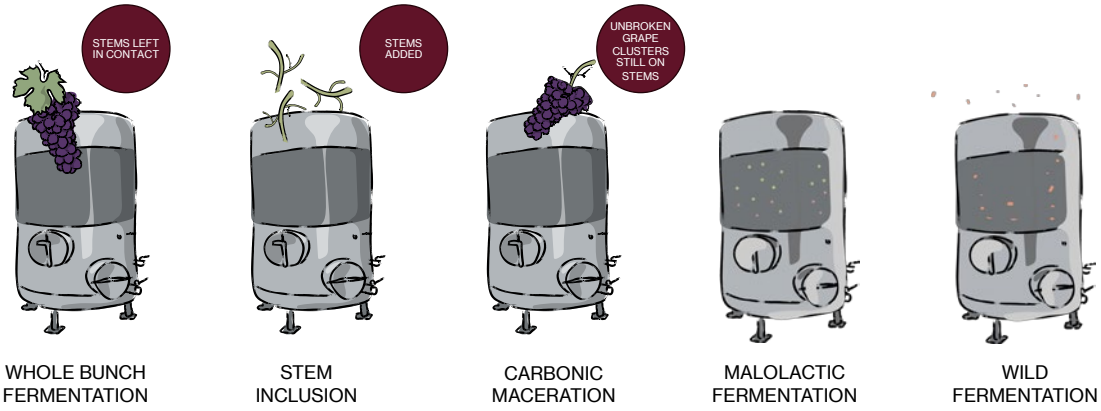
FEATURE VIDEO

Now is an appropriate time to play the feature video, ***How red wine is made***. While it's not specific to Shiraz, it provides background context on the typical production process.

COMPLEMENTARY MODULE

Learn more about how wine is made in the Introduction to wine module, available at **www.australianwinediscovered.com**

WINEMAKING:
TECHNIQUES INFLUENCING SHIRAZ



WINEMAKING: TECHNIQUES INFLUENCING SHIRAZ STYLE

Varying techniques may be used, allowing the winemaker to create their own wine style and to build character and complexity.

Whole-bunch (aka cluster) fermentation:

Stems are left in contact with the grapes, which leads to a higher tannin content and heightened aromatics. It can also boost the wine's ageing potential.

Stem inclusion:

Stems are added to a ferment that began with de-stemmed fruit.

Carbonic maceration:

Carbonic maceration is essentially intra-cellular fermentation. Fermentation begins with whole, unbroken grape clusters still on the stems. In an anaerobic environment, like a vat filled with carbon dioxide, the grapes will begin to ferment within themselves (using their own enzymes). This works until the ABV reaches about 2%. Carbonic maceration imparts a unique character and leads to fruit-forward styles.

Malolactic fermentation:

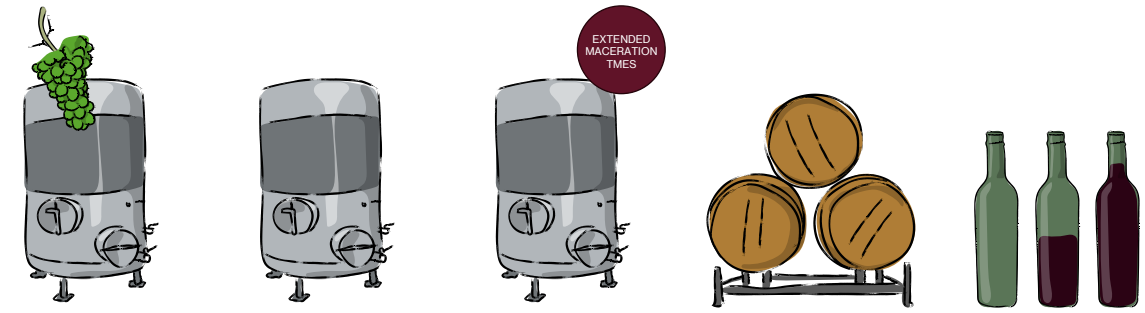
Lactic acid bacteria, occurring naturally or added to the fermented Shiraz juice, triggers the conversion of harder malic acid into soft, smooth lactic acid. Winemakers can also choose to employ partial malolactic fermentation. This decreases acid in the wine, stabilises wine and shapes aroma and flavour.

Wild fermentation:

Wild or indigenous yeasts that are naturally present in the microflora of the grape are used to ferment the wine rather than adding cultured yeasts (yeasts that are isolated then cultured in a laboratory). There aren't always textural differences present after wild yeast fermentation, but it can lead to a more complex wine.

WINEMAKING:

TECHNIQUES INFLUENCING SHIRAZ



CO-FERMENTATION WITH VIOGNIER

RACK AND RETURN

POST-FERMENTATION MACERATION / EXTENDED SKIN CONTACT

OAK MATURATION

BOTTLING AND AGEING

Co-fermentation with Viognier:

When Shiraz is co-fermented with a very small amount of Viognier, the wine's colour is brightened, the perfume is heightened and the palate becomes more supple.

Rack and return:

Involves extraction of the fermenting juice (must) from the skins, leaving the skins in the fermenter, then returning the juice on top of the skins. This increases oxygen exposure and helps increase extraction of colour and tannins.

Post-fermentation maceration/extended skin contact:

Extended maceration times (10–40 days) provide a smoother texture, more subtle tannins, less astringency and more savoury characters.

Oak maturation:

Shiraz is often matured in oak barrels (either French or American). Maturation in new oak barrels can impart notes of vanilla, smoke and coconut to Shiraz. While many producers still choose to mature their wine in new oak barrels, there is an overall trend towards using older oak (1 or 2 year old) barrels and larger oak vessels such as foudres, which impart a more subtle complexity to the wine.

Bottling and ageing:

Most Australian Shiraz is bottled with screw cap, with the exception of several high-end wines such as Penfolds Grange. The ageing potential varies depending on the different style and quality. Shiraz can age gracefully for up to 20 years, and up to half a century in premium examples. Many Australian Shiraz styles are made for early drinking (2–5 years).

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DID YOU KNOW

Shiraz makes very age-worthy wines, due in part to its abundant tannin levels and flavour concentration. Ageing softens the tannins and produces a rounded, smoother character over time.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

- What characteristics make a Shiraz wine age-worthy? How can a winemaker affect this in the winery?
- Why is oak almost always used in premium Shiraz's winemaking process?

COMMON STYLES OF SHIRAZ AND

ITS BLENDING PARTNERS

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts" applies well to blended Shiraz. Its colour, aroma, texture and flavours are boosted by the traits of its blending partner.



COMMON STYLES OF SHIRAZ AND ITS BLENDING PARTNERS

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts" is a saying that applies well to wines that include Shiraz in the blend. This variety can reach new heights when united with even a very small portion of another variety – its colour, aroma, texture and flavours boosted by the character traits of its blending partner.

It's worth pointing out that one of Australia's most highly praised wine, Penfolds Grange, is predominantly Shiraz blended with a small percentage (5%) of Cabernet Sauvignon. So while Shiraz as a single-varietal wine is our most enjoyed style in Australia, its role as a blending partner is just as important.

Shiraz's most common blending styles include:

- As blending material in **GSM.** Shiraz is the 'S', Grenache is the 'G' and Mataró (Mourvèdre) is the 'M'.
- As the equal partner in **Shiraz Cabernet**, a blockbuster style discovered and made popular in Australia.
- As the dominant variety in **Shiraz Viognier**, a well-honed practice in the Rhône. Adding Viognier delivers heightened aromas and supple texture.



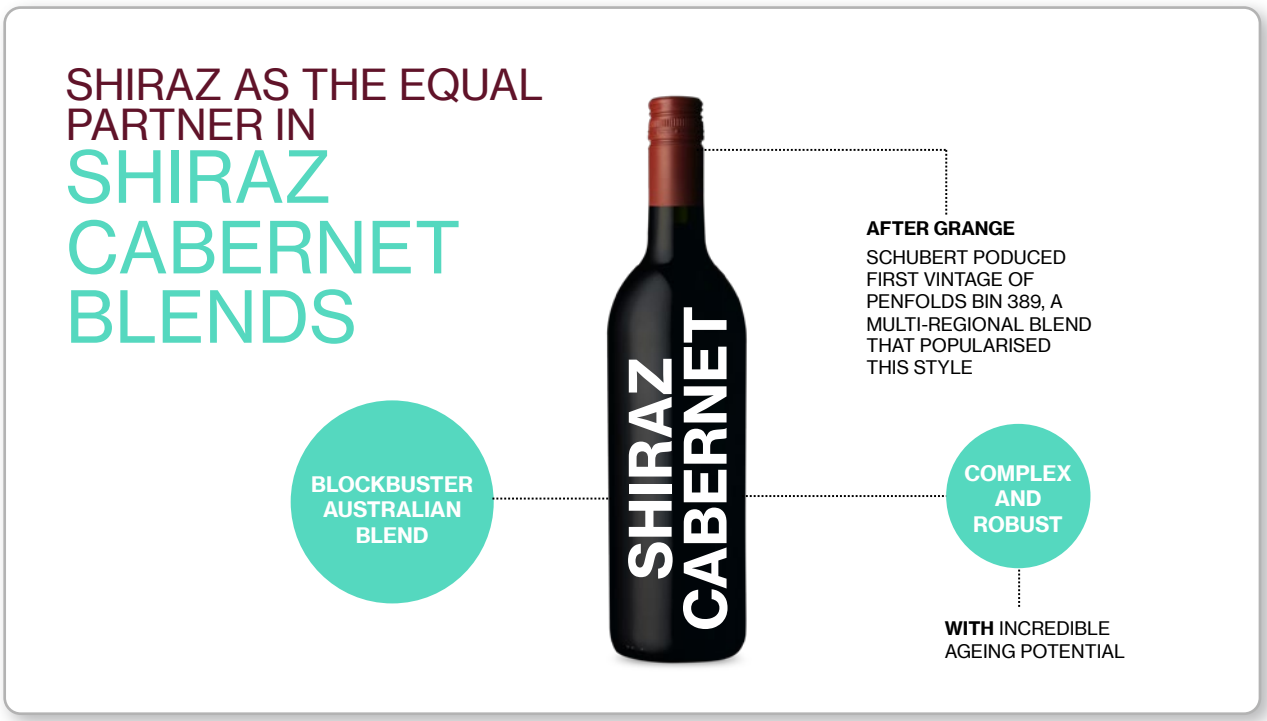
GSM BLENDS

Australian winemakers, especially those in South Australia's Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale, have embraced this style made famous in the Rhône region of France, in particular Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Its success comes from blending various proportions of each variety, with Shiraz most often playing the central role.

When Grenache was largely out of favour in Australia, a young winemaker in the Barossa, Charlie Melton, saw potential in dry-grown old Grenache vines. Melton took the fruit from these vines and blended it with Shiraz and Mourvèdre (Mataró) to create a wine that would go on to become a style loved by many wine drinkers.

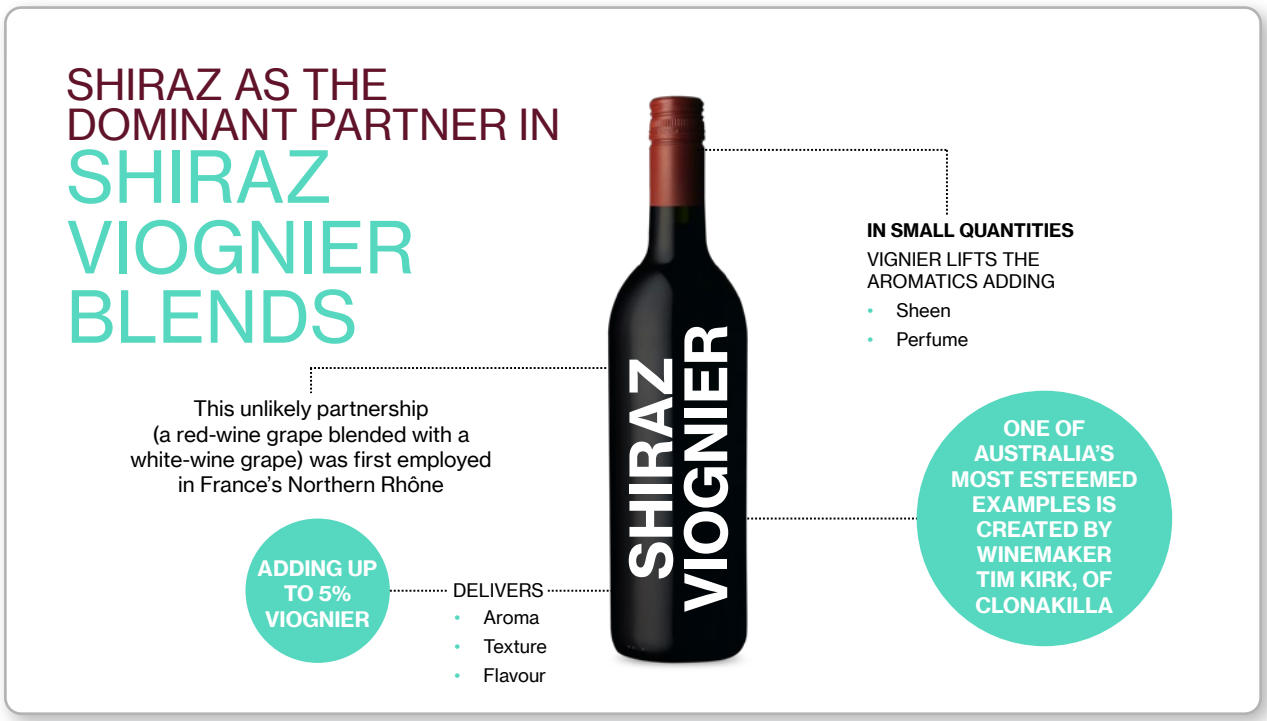
As the dominant variety in the blending trio, Shiraz contributes plenty of upfront dark fruit flavours such as blackberry, mulberry, blueberry, plum and black olive, and even savoury notes. Mourvèdre – a deep, rich, dark tannic wine, similar to Shiraz – adds length and drive to the wine.

The lightest-bodied of the GSM trio is Grenache – it adds fragrance, strawberry fruit and spice. Although Grenache is light in colour, it can elevate alcohol levels, contributing to the strong, rounded finish.



SHIRAZ CABERNET BLENDS

The Cabernet-Shiraz combination is uniquely Australian, renowned at home and abroad. These wines are complex and robust, with incredible ageing potential. Often the two varieties come from different regions. Multi-regional blending allows winemakers to source fruit from where it grows best. It's also important for volume blends that can't rely on souring from one region alone. In theory, the fruit should be at the ideal ripeness level for its region.



SHIRAZ VIOGNIER

This unlikely partnership (a red wine grape blended, and in some instances co-fermented, with a white wine grape) was first employed in France's Northern Rhône. Its success has spread to various parts of the winemaking world, including Australia. Even in tiny quantities Viognier contributes a significant lift to the final wine, adding sheen and perfume. This practice has taken off in South Australia (Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale) and Victoria (Yarra Valley), while one of Australia's most esteemed examples is created by winemaker Tim Kirk of Clonakilla, with cool-climate fruit grown in the Canberra District.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

- What benefits does Cabernet bring to Shiraz when used as a blending partner?
- What benefits does Viognier bring to Shiraz when used as a blending partner?

AN AUSTRALIAN TREASURE

SPARKLING RED

- Australian 'sparkling Burgundy' has been produced with Shiraz grapes since 1881
- Despite a small number of Australian producers creating this variety, its fans are devoted to its heady, rich and juicy-fruit flavour
- Best examples boast a velvety palate, sweet blackberries and blueberries, cherries and spices
- One of the differences between red and white sparkling is that red typically undergoes oak maturation, displaying complexity and richness
- Sparkling reds are made from a range of varieties, but sparkling Shiraz is the predominant one



COMPLEMENTARY READING

SPARKLING RED – AN AUSTRALIAN TREASURE

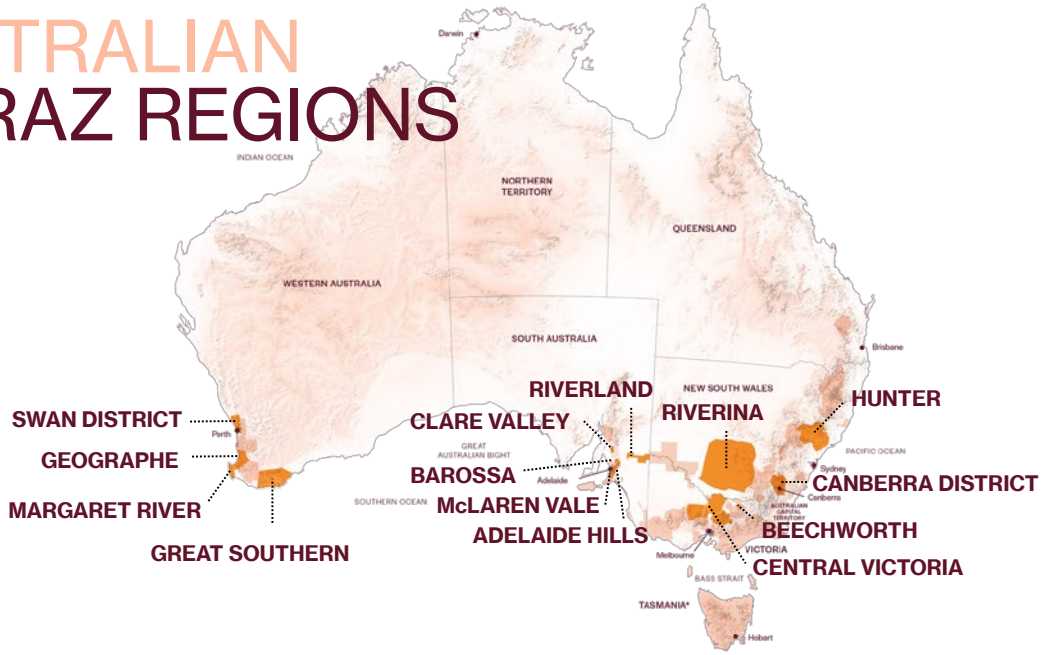
Australians have been drinking sparkling wine for many years. Going back as far as 1881, Victoria was home to the Victorian Champagne Company. This was where French winemaker Auguste D'Argent made one of the first examples of Australian 'sparkling Burgundy' from Shiraz. The Victorian Champagne Company didn't last, but Hans Irvine at Great Western took up the sparkling Burgundy baton and the trend continued under Seppelts with the legendary Colin Preece. His sparkling reds have inspired many other producers to create their own take on this incomparable Australian style.

Sparkling reds can be made from a range of varieties, but sparkling Shiraz is the predominant one. Rockford 'Black Shiraz', Seppelt 'Original Sparkling Shiraz' and Leasingham 'Classic Clare' are a few examples of this lavish, luscious style, with other producers including Rumball, Best's Great Western, Kay Brothers and Ashton Hills.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINT

- How does sparkling Shiraz compare to its sparkling white cousins?

AUSTRALIAN SHIRAZ REGIONS



AUSTRALIAN SHIRAZ REGIONS

Shiraz is planted in almost every region in Australia. Due to its different climates, soils and growing conditions, Australia has the greatest diversity of styles and qualities of Shiraz in the world. Its complex array of styles and qualities are informed by the regions and terroirs that work in combination with creative winemaking techniques. Shiraz is relatively adaptable and can be grown in moderate to cool regions as well as warm areas, but thrives in moderate to warm climates.

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COMPLEMENTARY MODULE

To discover more about some of Australia's most prominent wine regions, explore our regional modules at **www.australianwinediscovered.com**



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South Australia is responsible for almost half of Australia's annual grape production. It's also home to some of the oldest vines and most famous regions in the country, such as the Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale and Clare Valley. Here, we focus on the region of the world's oldest continuously producing Shiraz vines, Barossa Valley and Eden Valley, their southerly neighbour McLaren Vale, Clare Valley and cool-climate region Adelaide Hills.



BAROSSA VALLEY

- One of Australia's oldest and best-known Shiraz regions
- Barossa Shiraz is one of the most widely available and best-known red wines in the global market
- An important component in classic Shiraz-Cabernet and GSM blends
- Full-bodied, richly textured wines with black fruit, pepper and spice characters

BAROSSA VALLEY SHIRAZ

With a rich history dating back to 1842, boasting some of the world's oldest continuously producing Shiraz vineyards, Barossa is loved for its bold Shiraz bursting with flavour and character, made possible by its temperate, Mediterranean climate that lends itself perfectly to the production of extraordinary wines. Foodies will love the region's epicurean culture, which complements the historic vine heritage, making it a popular tourist destination.

The hallmark of Barossa Valley Shiraz is a full-bodied powerful, richly textured wine, that shows black fruit, warm spice, mocha, dried fruit, pepper and spice characters, with cedary, oaky aromas and flavours.

FEATURE VIDEO

Now is a good time to play the feature video, ***Barossa Shiraz***.

Notable Barossa Valley Shiraz producers include:

- **Rockford 'Basket Press' Shiraz** – dry-grown fruit sourced from local growers, traditionally made, big flavours, age-worthy.
- **Langmeil 'The Freedom' 1843 Shiraz** – made from what they claim are the oldest Shiraz vines in the world.



EDEN VALLEY

- Part of the greater Barossa Zone
- High-altitude vineyards
- Later harvest timing
- Home to Henschke ‘Hill of Grace’ Shiraz
- Medium-bodied to full-bodied Shiraz with classic blackberry, sage and pepper notes

EDEN VALLEY SHIRAZ

The Barossa Valley is one of two regions in the Barossa Zone. The other smaller but still-prominent region is Eden Valley, which produces wonderful medium-bodied to full-bodied Shiraz from cool-climate fruit, with classic blackberry, blueberry, sage and pepper notes.

Its vineyards sit at higher altitudes (310–540m/1017–1772ft) than those in the Barossa Valley, with weather conditions characterised by warm days and very cool nights, affording the fruit long periods of sunshine during the growing season. Harvest takes place up to two weeks later than the Barossa Valley due to fruit ripening later in the season.

Rolling, exposed hills with moderately steep gradients are commonplace, and the correct match of site and variety is critical. Given the region’s varied terrain, there are a number of soil types. The most common range from grey to brown in colour, and from loamy sand to clay loams. Ironstone gravels, quartz gravels and rock fragments are present in the surface and subsurface.

Notable Eden Valley Shiraz producers include:

- **Henschke ‘Hill of Grace’ Shiraz** – highly acclaimed, fruit sourced from dry-grown Eden Valley vines boasting more than 100 years of heritage.
- **Mountadam Vineyards High Eden ‘Patriarch’ Shiraz** – honours Mountadam’s founder and one of Australia’s great wine visionaries, David Wynn; made from oldest Shiraz plantings in High Eden sub-region, at an altitude of 500m (1640ft).

ADVANCED NOTES

BAROSSA'S OLD VINES

- Barossa is home to the world's oldest continuously producing Shiraz, Grenache, Mataro (Mourvèdre) and Cabernet Sauvignon vineyards, with one Shiraz planting believed to date back to 1843.
- Low-yielding old vines go through the ripening process more consistently, producing grapes that are full of intensity and flavour, and contributing to great complexity, structure and balance.
- Old vines do present their challenges, often needing lots of nurturing and producing extremely low yields.
- Their deep roots are a great asset. They aren't affected by short rainstorms in wet vintages. And in times of drought, they can tap into water reserves in the subsoil.
- While vine age is often seen as an indicator of quality, it's certainly not a prerequisite. However, vineyards that consistently produce great wine are often well taken care of and therefore have the opportunity to become old vines.

COMPLEMENTARY MODULE

Discover more about our history in the Australia's old vines module, available at **www.australianwinediscovered.com**



McLAREN VALE

- One of world's most geologically diverse regions
- Red wine wonderland
- Shiraz is the most planted red variety in the region
- Full-bodied Shiraz with rich blueberry fruit and chocolate characters

ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S PREMIER SHIRAZ-GROWING REGIONS

MCLAREN VALE SHIRAZ

McLaren Vale is one of South Australia's oldest and most picturesque regions, located 35km south of Adelaide and nestled between the Mount Lofty Ranges and the white, sandy beaches of Gulf St Vincent. McLaren Vale's first grapes were planted in 1838, and some still-producing vines carry more than 100 years of heritage.

McLaren Vale is a red-variety wonderland. Its plantings comprise around 90% red grapes, with Shiraz the most planted red variety in the region. Grenache may be its secret weapon, but the region is recognised as one of Australia's premier Shiraz-growing regions.

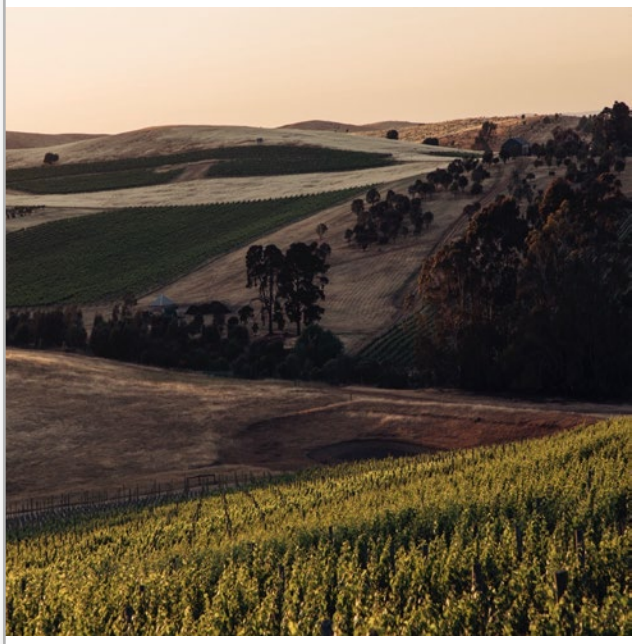
Temperatures in McLaren Vale are affected by its proximity to the sea. Its classic Mediterranean climate produces full-bodied Shiraz wines with rich blueberry fruit and chocolate characters. The cooling effect from the ocean creates substantial mesoclimate variation.

Although it has thousands of hectares under vine and demand for its wines are at an all-time global high, McLaren Vale retains the fierce innovative spirit with which it was born. Much of that spirit stems from the fact that it still has many boutique wineries that continue to push boundaries in search of perfection.

McLaren Vale is one of the most geologically diverse regions in the world, with more than 40 unique geologies that vary in age from 15,000 years to over 550 million years. Its wide variety of soil types include red-brown sandy loams, light clays interspersed with lime and distinctly sandy soils.

Notable McLaren Vale Shiraz producers include:

- **d'Arenberg 'Dead Arm' Shiraz** – flagship wine from iconic McLaren Vale producer, crafted from old, low-yielding vines; an exercise in power and intensity, matched with elegance and refinement.
- **Yangarra Estate Vineyard 'PF' Shiraz** – biodynamic winery, handcrafted wine made with wild yeast and cold-soaked with no additives or fining.
- **Kay Brothers Block 6 Shiraz** – the historic block 6 vineyard dates back to 1892. Extremely low yields produces an excellent example of a big, rich McLaren Vale Shiraz.
- **Wirra Wirra 'Catapult' Shiraz** – classic, big and bold Shiraz with great cellaring potential.



CLARE VALLEY

- Fertile farming/agricultural region
- Warm days help Shiraz develop richness, depth of flavour and fruit concentration
- Consistently cool nights aid in acid retention
- Decadent, opulent, rich Shiraz with black fruit flavours and an almost creamy texture

CLARE VALLEY SHIRAZ

Clare Valley is one of Australia's most scenically beautiful wine-producing regions. With undulating hills and meandering streams that wander close to gumtrees and stone houses, Clare Valley's geographical advantages make it a successful farming and agricultural region, providing the basis for fine-wine production.

For a region so famed for its delicate, feather-light Rieslings, Clare Valley is also home to full-bodied, decadently rich reds. The warm climate helps red grapes reach ideal ripeness to develop immense concentration, depth of flavour and clear varietal character. Clare Valley's warm days are ideal for the development of rich Shiraz flavours, and the consistently cool nights aid in acid retention.

The Shiraz wines from Clare Valley are full of opulence and vibrancy. They are plush, full-bodied, richly textured wines with flavours of blackberry, black cherry, plum and licorice.

The region enjoys a warm, moderate continental climate, with warm to hot summer days moderated by cooling afternoon and night breezes. This diurnal variation, where night temperatures plummet, helps keep the average temperature lower and gives vines respite from the heat of the day, slowing ripening and enhancing complexity.

Clare Valley's soils vary, ranging from classic terra rossa red topsoil over limestone (Watervale) to broken slate (Polish Hill River). Sandy loams and degraded quartz are also found in the western Clare Valley.

Notable Clare Valley Shiraz producers include:

- **Wendouree Shiraz** – Wendouree continues a legacy of tradition, making wines from vineyards planted in 1893. The grapes are hand-picked and create cult wines that age for decades.
- **Jim Barry 'The Armagh' Shiraz** – one of Australia's finest Shiraz wines. Biodynamic winery, handcrafted wine made from non-irrigated, low-yielding vines (less than 1.2 tonnes per acre); aged in American and French oak, dark cherry fruit, velvety tannins, liquorice, spice and floral notes underpinned by a big structure.



ADELAIDE HILLS

- Oldest surviving German settlement in Australia
- Cool maritime climate with high-elevation vineyards
- Adelaide Hills Shiraz flouts the big-bodied robust nature of neighbouring Barossa and McLaren Vale wines
- Elegant, medium-bodied Shiraz, with fragrant pepper and spice, and fine tannins
- Lower alcohol levels make this cool-climate style a very food-friendly wine

ADELAIDE HILLS SHIRAZ

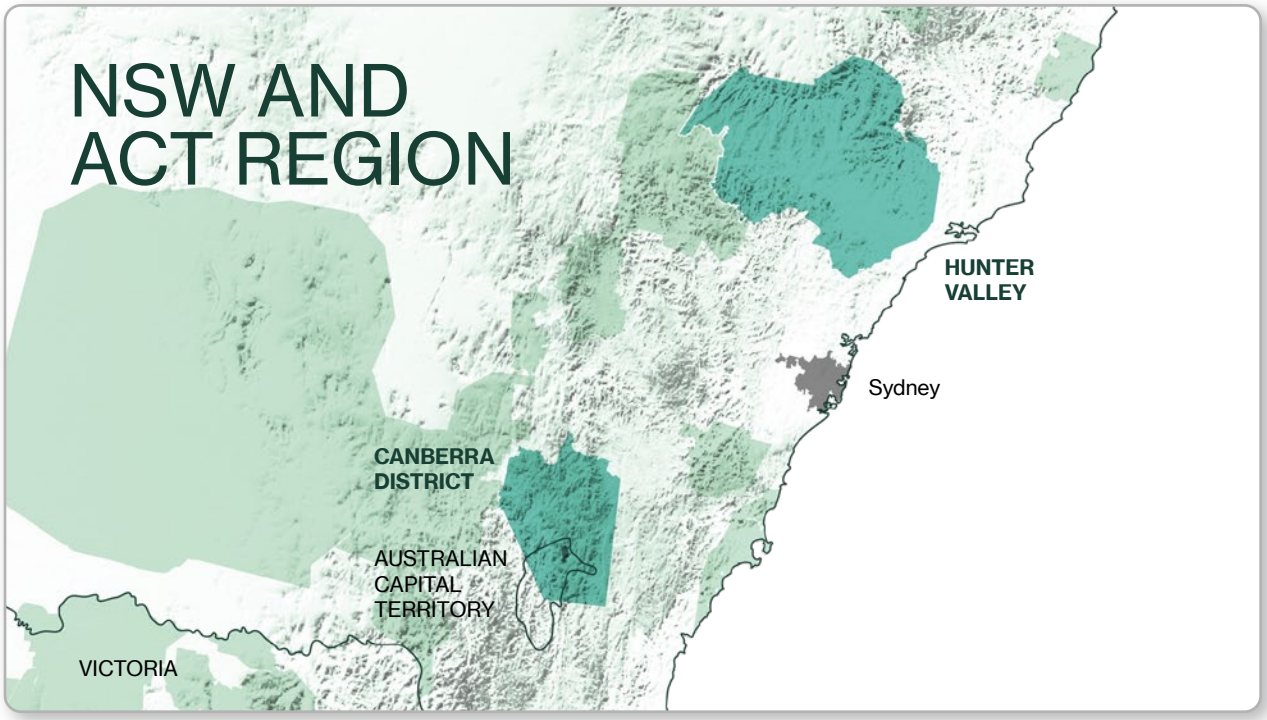
Settled by German immigrants in the 1800s, Adelaide Hills' central town of Hahndorf remains Australia's oldest surviving German settlement. This village hub boasts amazing art galleries and foodie hotspots, and it's a pathway to the region's vibrant cellar doors, only a 30-minute drive from Adelaide's CBD.

At its highest altitude, the Adelaide Hills is 650m (3133ft) above sea level and at its lowest points still remains bound by a 230m (755ft) elevation. Adelaide Hills winemakers produce diverse wine styles, including cool-climate stalwarts such as Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, but the common thread in all its wines is natural acidity and elegance.

Shiraz crafted from this cool maritime region is a strong contrast to the big, bold reds from South Australia's warm climates. With moderate alcohol levels, fragrant pepper and spice aromas, fine tannins and acids, Adelaide Hills Shiraz is fast emerging as a highly acclaimed style on the world's wine scene.

Notable Adelaide Hills Shiraz producers include:

– **Shaw + Smith Shiraz** – fragrant, elegant, spicy, medium-bodied, balanced, supple; oak plays a secondary role. Trailblazing producer.



NEW SOUTH WALES

This state is home to 14 individual wine regions, from Australia's oldest continuous wine region – the Hunter Valley – to big-volume stalwart zones such as the Riverina and cool-climate spots such as Orange, Tumbarumba and the Canberra District (which is spread across both NSW and the ACT, a territory within NSW). The Great Dividing Range influences the climate of highly elevated Orange and Canberra.
Here we focus on the warm Hunter Valley and the cool Canberra District.



HUNTER VALLEY

- Birthplace of Australian wine industry
- Warm, humid climate ideal for Shiraz fruit ripeness
- Known for medium-bodied, savoury, complex wines
- Young Hunter Shiraz displays red and dark berries, spice and lots of tannin
- Aged Hunter Shiraz is smooth and richly flavoured with earthy tones and complexity

HUNTER VALLEY SHIRAZ

Semillon is widely considered the iconic wine of this region, but the Hunter produces wine from a wide variety of grapes including Shiraz. The birthplace of Australian wine, James Busby helped establish the Hunter Valley as a key wine region. At less than three hours' drive from Sydney's CBD, the Hunter Valley has become a beacon for tourists who are attracted by its rich history and to enjoy the taste of Hunter wines.

In years gone by, Shiraz wines from this warm, humid region were big and bold. Today the region's winemakers are producing medium-bodied wines that are savoury, complex and food friendly. Young Hunter Shiraz can show red and dark berries, spice and lots of tannin, but as they age they become more complex, yet smooth and richly flavoured with earthy, savoury tones.

The Hunter Valley's climate is characterised by warm and humid days in spring and summer, and chilly nights in autumn and winter. The rain, humidity, cloud cover and gentle sea breezes mitigate the warmth. The summer-dominated rainfall can occur during harvest in some years. Lower Hunter soils vary from sandy alluvial flats to deep loam and friable red duplex soils. In the Upper Hunter, the rivers and creeks contribute to the area's black, silty loam soils that are often overlaid on top of alkaline clay loam. The hills of the Brokenback Range feature strips of volcanic basalt.

Notable Hunter Valley Shiraz producers include:

- **Mount Pleasant 'Maurice O'Shea' Shiraz** – an iconic Hunter Valley wine, it draws on the rich heritage of local winemaking dating back to 1921 when Maurice O'Shea purchased land in the parish of Pokolbin. Great balance, intensity and length.
- **Brokenwood Shiraz** – benchmark Hunter Valley Shiraz, medium-bodied, elegant, with bright fruit intensity and great structure.
- **Tyrrell's 'Vat 9' Shiraz** – flagship Hunter Valley Shiraz with a classic earthy, savoury nose. Sourced from old vines, some dating back as far as 1879.
- **Andrew Thomas Wines 'Kiss' Shiraz** – Thomas's flagship from a vineyard planted in 1969. Medium-bodied and intense; underlying bright fruit flavour is cut through with earthy, savoury notes and fine, soft tannins.



CANBERRA DISTRICT

- Emerging winemaking scene with strong drive for innovation
- Shiraz is the red wine that has brought the Canberra District its greatest fame
- Mix of geology, climate and expertise creates spicy, peppery, lean yet balanced and flavoursome Shiraz
- Home to Clonakilla, producer of acclaimed Shiraz-Viognier blend

CANBERRA DISTRICT SHIRAZ

When most people think of great Australian wine regions, the Canberra District doesn't jump to the top of the list. To some, Australia's capital city carries a reputation of being a bland, conservative centre. However, this inland territory offers a thriving cool-climate wine culture that represents one of Australian wine's best-kept secrets.

Canberra wines have already made an impact on wine lovers and critics, producing some extraordinary cool-climate wines. Now a new wave of excitement is sweeping through the region as established winemakers are joined by a new generation of winemakers who are setting the scene for a future of new varieties and revolutionary winemaking.

Shiraz is the red wine that has brought the Canberra District its greatest fame. A combination of geology, climate and winemaking expertise creates spicy, peppery, impeccably balanced and flavoursome Shiraz.

Sometimes blended with Viognier, the wines reflect the elegance, power and balance of Rhône-style classics. Shiraz Viognier is one of the region's most successful blends, and the most renowned exemplar of this style is winemaker Tim Kirk at Clonakilla, in Canberra's Murrumbateman, 40km north of Canberra.

Canberra's continental climate is one of extremes: cold, crisp winters and hot, dry summers. This high diurnal temperature range is what excites winemakers – long, warm days for grape ripening, with a sudden drop in night temperature to give the vines respite. The geographic and climatic conditions allow grapes to reach physiological ripeness while retaining high levels of natural acidity – optimal precursors for fine wines. Extended warm periods in the lead-up to the vintage can cause grapes to quickly gain sugar and lose acidity. This can affect the outcome of later-ripening varietals like Shiraz, making harvest times critical – just one day can make a noticeable difference in the fruit profile and balance of the finished wine. In great vintages with benign conditions, the wines are seriously impressive.

Notable Canberra District Shiraz producers include:

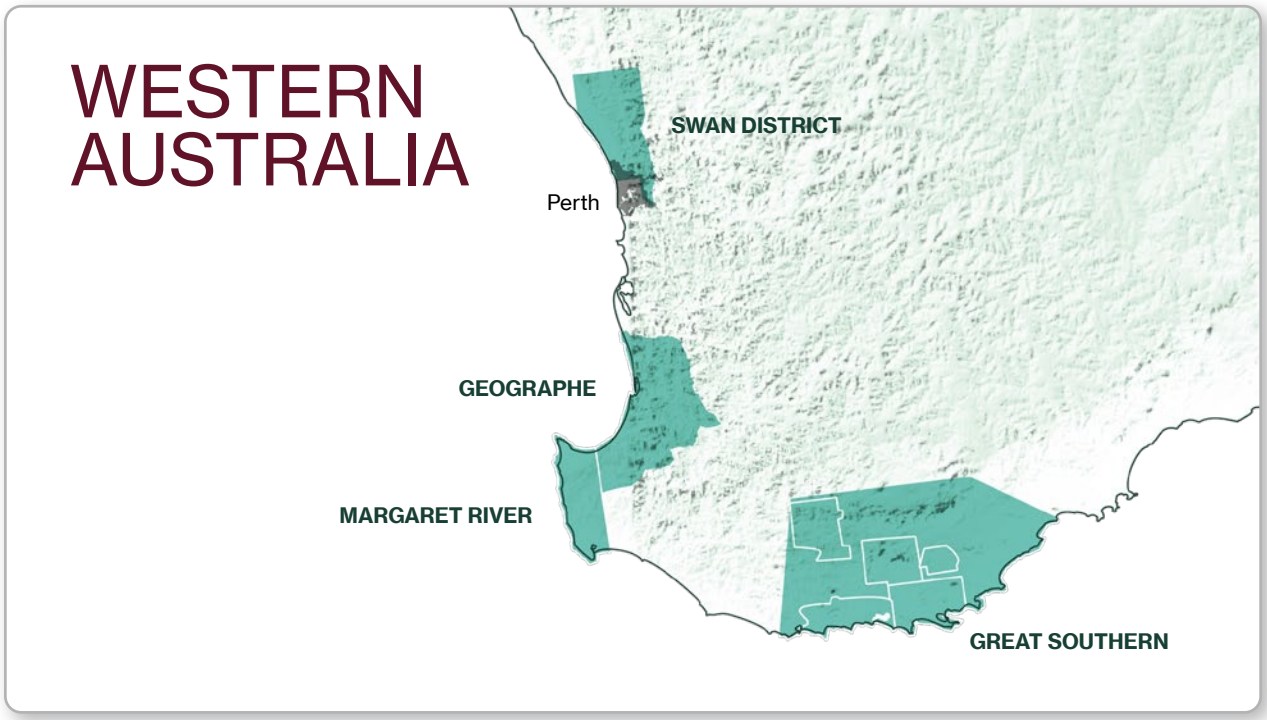
- **Nick O'Leary Shiraz** – small-batch, whole-bunch produced, soft, elegant and refined, produced by emerging Canberra winemaker.

COMPLEMENTARY READING

THE CLONAKILLA LEGACY

The Kirk family arrived in Australia from Ireland in 1968. Just three years later, John Kirk planted a vineyard, naming the property 'Clonakilla' after the family farm in Ireland's County Clare. The first commercial wines (and the first for any in this region) were made in 1976. Viognier was first planted in 1986, and at that time it was viewed as an exotic variety. Clonakilla Shiraz was blended with Cabernet Sauvignon during the 1980s, but 1991 Tim Kirk decided to model the wine on single-vineyard blends he'd tasted in the northern Rhône, France. The first Clonakilla Shiraz Viognier was made in 1992.

Within only 15 years, Shiraz Viognier attained 'Exceptional' status in Langton's Classification of Australian Wine. The highly sought-after Clonakilla Shiraz Viognier has encouraged winemakers around Australia to emulate the style, both in cool regions like Eden Valley and the Yarra Valley, and in warmer regions with varying success. Thanks to Clonakilla, the Canberra district represents the Shiraz-Viognier benchmark in Australia.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Western Australia's winemaking regions are concentrated in the south-west and Great Southern divisions. Some regions are close to the state's capital, Perth, such as Swan District, but most are located further south. The regions include Blackwood Valley, Geographe, Great Southern, Peel, Pemberton, Manjimup and Margaret River. Here, we're focusing on Margaret River, Great Southern, Geographe and Swan Valley.



MARGARET RIVER

- Shiraz is the second most planted red grape, behind well-renowned Cabernet Sauvignon
- Mediterranean climate with strong maritime influences, with oceans on three sides
- Shiraz displays fruit ripeness, vibrancy, flavour depth and roundness of texture
- Good acid level allows Shiraz to age gracefully

MARGARET RIVER SHIRAZ

Margaret River is one of the most geographically isolated wine regions in the world. Located in the far south-west corner of Western Australia, it's bordered on three sides by the ocean. But this isolation has been no barrier to the development of the region as it has grown and evolved into a place dedicated to the pursuit of great food, exceptional lifestyle and fine wine. Margaret River's coastal location makes it a place of natural beauty, with its vineyards set back from breathtaking coastal shorelines.

In the 1950s and '60s, Professor Harry Olmo and Dr John Gladstones identified the region as boasting superb conditions for viticulture. The area's high winter rainfall, a dry, warm summer and low risk of frost and hail – combined with grey loam on a subsoil of clay – have proven Olmo and Gladstones correct.

Cabernet Sauvignon may be Margaret River's hero variety, but Shiraz is nipping at its heels as innovative winemakers produce this iconic variety in a Mediterranean climate with strong maritime influences. A low diurnal temperature range leads to even heat accumulation.

Margaret River Shiraz displays fruit ripeness, vibrancy, flavour depth and roundness of texture, with refreshing acidity that allows the wines to age gracefully.

Notable Margaret River Shiraz producers include:

- Vasse Felix Shiraz – modern, elegant, complex, oldest Shiraz vines in Margaret River.
- Voyager Estate Shiraz – classic, sensual, seductive, Margaret River Shiraz.



GREAT SOUTHERN

- Southerly location gives it a cool maritime climate
- Five distinct sub-regions
- A healthy place for vine growth, almost free of pests and disease
- Shiraz is medium in weight and exhibits an earthy blend of liquorice, spice, pepper, cherry and plum
- Many producers avoid the heavy-handed use of American oak, allowing the fruit to shine through

GREAT SOUTHERN SHIRAZ

The Great Southern wine region provides an ideal environment for creating distinctive regional wines. It's as large as it is diverse, stretching 150 kilometres (93 miles) in length and 100 kilometres (62 miles) across. Its geography is a patchwork of coastal maritime land, gently undulating hills, open grazing country, eucalypt forests and granite outcrops. And this variety is what makes the Great Southern so convincing as a supreme winemaking region.

It boasts five distinctive sub-regions, but it's Frankland River in the north that is the most compelling for Shiraz. The regional climate ranges from the coastal, maritime sub-regions of Albany and Denmark to the inland, continental sub-regions of Mount Barker, Porongurup and Frankland River. Frankland River is a healthy place for vine growth, being almost completely free of pests and disease, and a good distance from industrial production and pollution.

The Great Southern wine region produces a range of Shiraz styles, but generally the wines display medium weight, liquorice, black cherry, spice, silky texture, fine tannin profile and a pepper/anise character. Many producers avoid the heavy-handed use of American oak, allowing the fruit to shine through.

Notable Great Southern Shiraz producers include:

– **Larry Cherubino 'Cherubino' Frankland River Shiraz** – ground spices, black cherry, spicy aromatics, earthy nuances that are typical of the region.



GEOGRAPHE

- Warm climate modified by Indian Ocean breeze
- Shiraz tends to be bold in flavour, but soft in texture
- Producers are shifting their style to be more medium-bodied in weight than fuller-bodied styles
- Fruit characters on the cherry or red berry fruit spectrum, with hints of mint and peppery spice

GEOGRAPHE SHIRAZ

Two and a half hours south of Perth, Geographe sits on the coast bordering the Indian Ocean. Its excessively warm temperatures are modified by the prevailing south-west sea breezes coming off the Indian Ocean. Wines produced from Geographe Shiraz tend to be bold in flavour but soft in texture, and a growing number of winemakers are shifting their style to display a more medium-bodied weight rather than fuller-bodied styles. Fruit characters for Geographe Shiraz tend to be in the cherry or red berry fruit spectrum, with hints of mint and peppery spice.

Notable Geographe Shiraz producers include:

- Fifth Estate Wines Shiraz
- Willow Bridge Estate 'Gravel Pit' Shiraz



SWAN VALLEY

- One of Australia's warmest and oldest wine regions
- Perfect conditions for Shiraz production, with a warm to hot Mediterranean climate and very dry conditions for ripening season
- Shiraz shows a spectrum of ripe and dried fruit in a full-bodied drop
- Softness and length to Swan Valley Shiraz, providing a suppleness and drinkability in young wines

SWAN VALLEY SHIRAZ

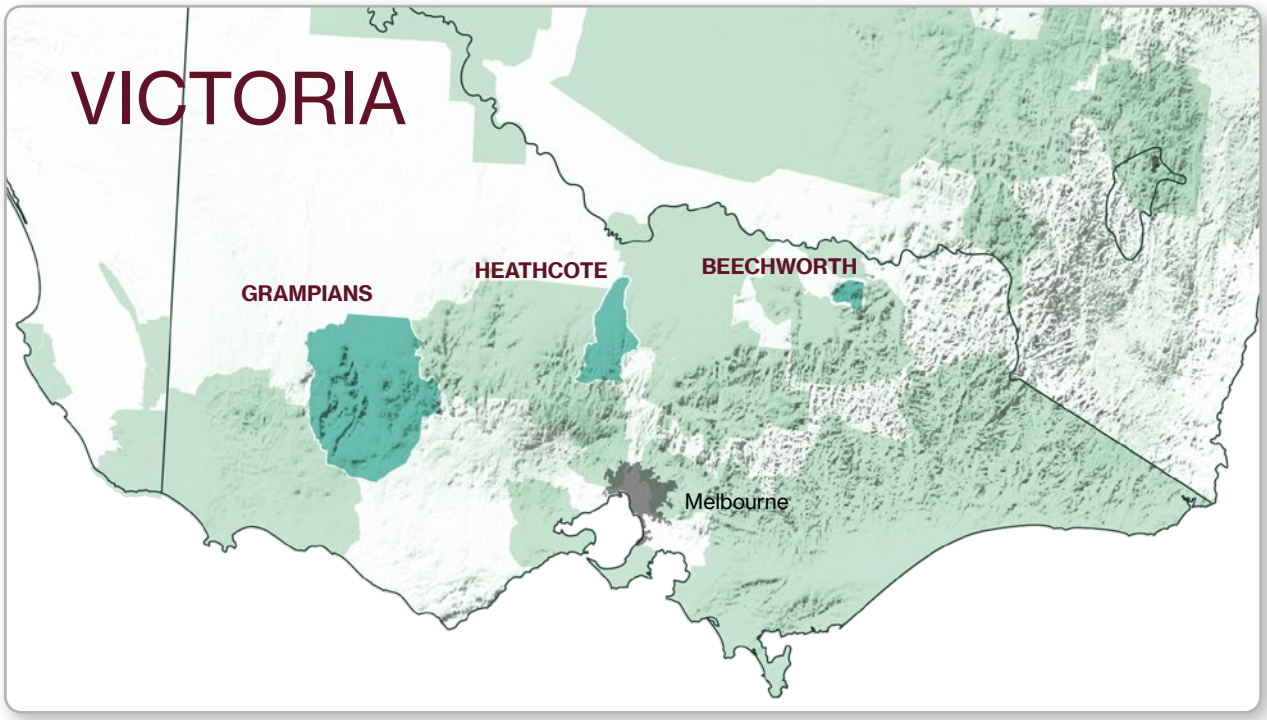
The Swan District is Western Australia's oldest wine region, having been planted by English settlers soon after their arrival in 1829. For almost 150 years it was the only significant wine-producing region in Western Australia. Some of Western Australia's finest wines and local produce can be found in the sub-region of Swan Valley.

It's one of the warmest grape-growing regions in the country, with a warm to hot Mediterranean climate and very dry conditions during ripening. But the district is relieved from the heat by the famous Fremantle Doctor, the south-westerly sea breeze.

Shiraz thrives in these conditions, with warm temperatures and gravelly soils, and it's made by most of the winemakers in the region. Swan Valley Shiraz shows a spectrum of ripe and dried fruit, including plum and prune, as well as chocolate, liquorice and spice, with typical richness in a luscious full-bodied drop. There's also a softness and length to Swan Valley Shiraz, married with toasty sweet oak, providing a suppleness and drinkability in young wines.

Notable Swan Valley Shiraz producers include:

– Sitella Swan Valley Shiraz



VICTORIA

Victoria is the most densely populated wine region in Australia, with more regions and wineries than any other state. Its geographical diversity allows each region to produce many styles, including elegant cool-climate Shiraz from the Yarra Valley and Mornington Peninsula, Geelong and Beechworth. Warmer-climate examples from Central Victoria are also prized throughout the world. Here, we're focusing on Central Victoria, the Grampians and the cooler-climate region of Beechworth.



HEATHCOTE

- One of Australia's warmest and oldest wine regions
- Perfect conditions for Shiraz production, with a warm to hot Mediterranean climate and very dry conditions for ripening season
- Shiraz shows a spectrum of ripe and dried fruit in a full-bodied drop
- Softness and length to Swan Valley Shiraz, providing a suppleness and drinkability in young wines

CENTRAL VICTORIA

Heathcote Shiraz

This Shiraz-producing region is located between the Goulburn Valley and Bendigo regions, and is well known for its Shiraz production. The region's first vines appeared in the 1860s but it wasn't until the 1960s that the real wave of development occurred. Founded in the 1850s, the heritage streetscapes of Heathcote reflect the town's gold-rush past.

Heathcote's Shiraz production has an advantage from its rich soil deposits of iron oxide derived from rock of the Cambrian age – the oldest in Victoria at 500-million-plus years. Iron oxide is encrusted in this region's red soil – a striking and highly visible feature throughout the area – making Heathcote Shiraz some of the most intensely coloured and flavoured on the planet.

Heathcote's red soil and warm summers, tempered by cool, southerly winds, allow it to produce robust, full-bodied Shiraz wines of power and weight, with great texture and balance. They are defined by their inky depth of colour and dark, complex fruit. Acid and tannin meld together in a way that doesn't dominate the fruit, but gives the wine great cellaring capability.

Notable Heathcote Shiraz producers include:

- **Jasper Hill 'Georgia's Paddock'** – an iconic Heathcote vineyard. Rich in character and complexity with extreme ageability.
- **Sanguine Estate 'Inception' Shiraz** – intense, rich, focused, French oak influence and robust structure; showcases Heathcote's terroir.

?

DID YOU KNOW

Heathcote was home to one of the richest sources of gold during the gold-rush era, but now its primary products are wool, honey, timber and wine.



GRAMPIANS

- One of the country's oldest Shiraz vineyards planted in 1860s
- Cooler-climate region – warm to hot days, cool nights
- Region is especially well suited to later-ripening red varieties such as Shiraz
- The Great Western sub-region is adept at producing elegant Shiraz of deep purple
- Great Western Shiraz displays black pepper, plum, mint and clove, with fine but firm tannins

GRAMPIANS SHIRAZ

The Grampians wine region has been producing premium wines for more than 150 years. Vineyards were first planted in as early as 1863 and include grape varieties so rare that several have defied attempts at identification and are most likely the sole surviving examples in the world.

The landscape of the region is renowned for its natural beauty and produces wines with a rare combination of elegance, beauty and power. The climate is Mediterranean and the proximity to the Southern Ocean (100km–200km) provides a cooling influence during summer. Recognised as a cooler-climate grape-growing region, the growing season in summer is characterised by warm to hot days and cool to cold nights. Autumn is mild and produces the most pleasant weather, perfect for ripening grapes. The region is especially well suited to later-ripening red varieties such as Shiraz.

The Great Western sub-region of the Grampians is particularly adept at producing elegant Shiraz. It's deeper in colour – a deep purple hue – with all the sophistication of a cooler-climate Shiraz. Its flavours are typically black pepper, plum, mint and clove, with savoury and spicy notes, and fine but firm tannins.

Notable Grampians Shiraz producers include:

- **Best's Great Western 'Bin No. 1' Shiraz** – one of the region's most affordable and approachable expressions of the Great Western Shiraz style.
- **Mount Langi Ghiran 'Langi' Shiraz** – selectively hand harvested from their iconic "Langi Old Block", planted in 1963. Highly-expressive cool-climate Shiraz.



BEECHWORTH

- Cool climate, at the foothills of the Victorian Alps
- Shiraz thrives in this cool sub-alpine climate
- Shiraz expressions are medium in body, with savoury, spicy and earthy characters
- Home to Giaconda, one of Australia's premier producers of Shiraz and Chardonnay

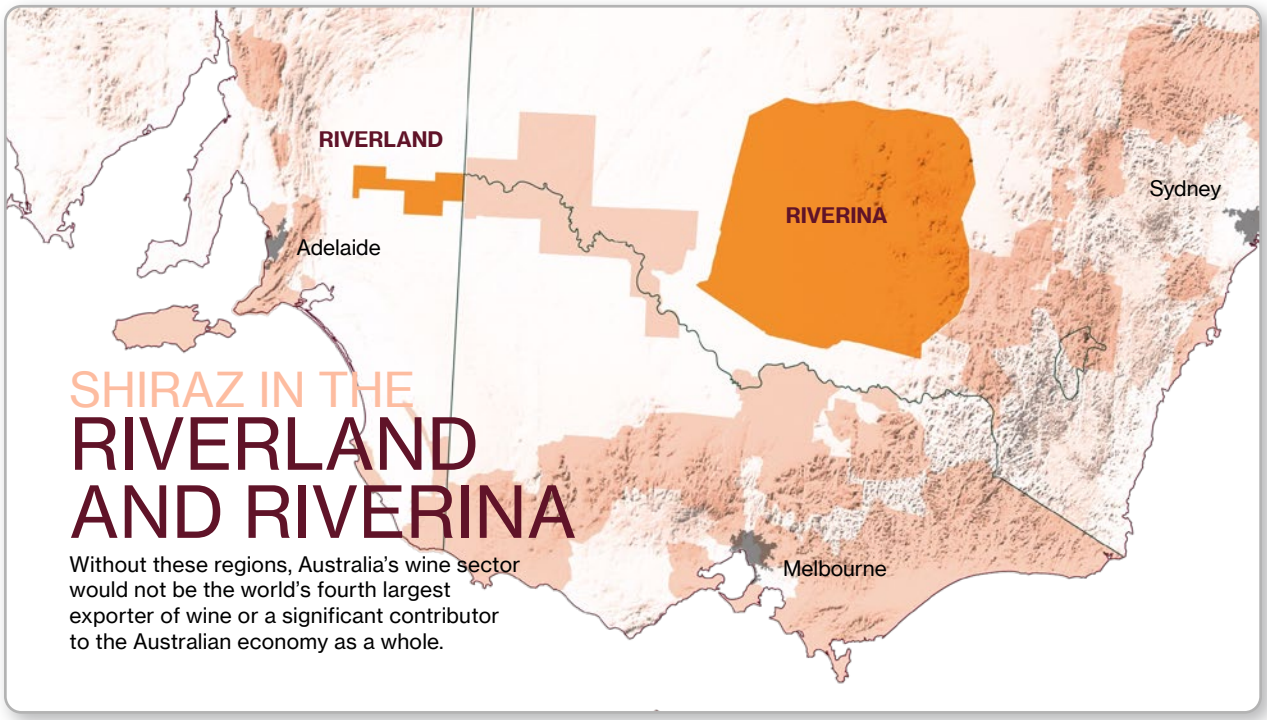
BEECHWORTH SHIRAZ

At the foothills of the Victorian Alps, the tiny region of Beechworth is home to hillside vineyards with a range of altitudes and different topographical aspects that allow for the production of premium grape varieties such as Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Shiraz. Beechworth is situated on the continental side of the Victorian Alps, which allows for warm, sunny days to reliably ripen the crop, and cool nights that temper any heat and produce wine grapes with natural balance and elegance. The mineral-rich hills feature old sandstone and gravel over clay or granitic topsoils from volcanic deposits, with the best sites on sloping gradients for better air drainage to avoid frost issues.

Shiraz thrives in this cool sub-alpine climate, with its best expressions seen in wines with medium body, savoury, spicy and earthy characters. Despite the small number of independent wineries in the region, their innovative spirit looms large over the premium wines crafted here. There's a strong interest in biodynamic and organic principles, and innovation is at the forefront of most production.

Notable Beechworth Shiraz producers include:

– **Giaconda 'Estate Vineyard' Shiraz** – crafted by one of Australia's most respected winemakers, Rick Kinzbrunner.



SHIRAZ IN THE RIVERLAND AND RIVERINA

A fair proportion of Australia's Shiraz grapes are used by big-volume producers to make easy-drinking, approachable Australian wine. Much of the fruit is grown in South Australia's Riverland and NSW's Riverina regions. While not necessarily known for their age-worthy or iconic Shiraz wines, they inject a significant boost into the Australian wine industry and are of tremendous economic importance.



RIVERLAND

- Long-established, warm-climate winemaking powerhouse, located east of the Barossa Valley
- Producers are encouraging modern style development, with full-flavoured, generous and approachable Shiraz

RIVERLAND SHIRAZ

The Riverland in South Australia is a long-established, warm-climate wine-producing powerhouse, located east of the Barossa Valley and extending for 330km along the Murray River. Riverland winemakers are encouraging style development, making full-flavoured, generous and approachable Shiraz.

A new generation of progressive winemakers have moved into the area, embracing the change to make wine with alternative varieties, farm sustainably and adapt their practices to include organic and biodynamic viticulture.



RIVERINA

- Efficient and innovative production methods have allowed for strong export success
- Riverina Shiraz includes easy-drinking wines with vibrant juicy-ripe fruit, sweet vanilla and spice, through to more elegant, refined expressions
- Home to ‘critter’ wine phenomenon

RIVERINA SHIRAZ

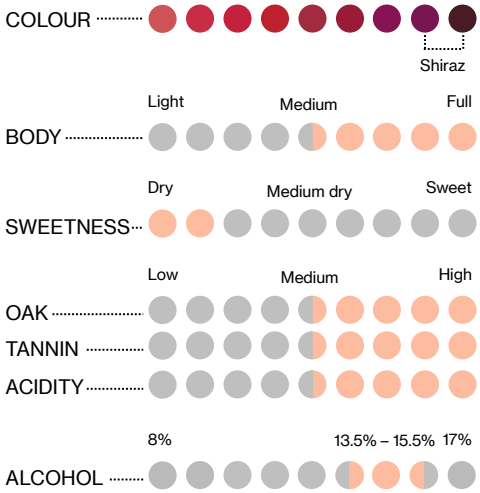
NSW’s Riverina grows more than 10% of Australia’s total grape production and is the largest wine-producing region in New South Wales. The region spans across a flat tract of land on the state’s south-west plains with vineyards spread across thousands of hectares, with its core being the city of Griffith.

The region’s climate, including low relative humidity, ample sunshine and low natural rainfall, allows for the consistent production of grapes assisted by modern drip irrigation. High productivity has allowed for great export success with both whites and reds, including Shiraz.

The issue of climate change is felt more acutely in the Riverina, with summer temperatures hitting 40°C and above several times throughout the ripening season. The region is currently benefiting from research into hardier heat-resistant clones and vine stress assessment technology in order to survive as a winemaking region in an increasingly warm climate.

Wines produced in this region are benefiting from a recent renaissance driven by its producers, many boasting a rich Italian heritage, including the Casella family, whose winery produces the internationally successful Yellow Tail Wines, De Bortoli and Calabria Family Wines.

BAROSSA SHIRAZ
CHARACTERISTICS





FLAVOURS

- Pepper
- Blackberry
- Spice
- Plum
- Dark Cherry
- Chocolate
- Coffee

TIME TO TASTE – Now is an appropriate time to taste and discuss your selected mix of wines.

CHARACTERISTICS AND FLAVOUR PROFILES

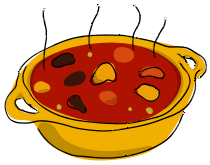
Shiraz creates medium-bodied to full-bodied wines with varying flavour profiles and structure depending on region, climate, vine age and winemaking techniques.

Its wonderfully diverse expressions go a fair way to explaining Shiraz's position as the leading variety in the country. Many drinkers love Shirazes crafted from warm-climate fruit by traditional winemakers, with their bold upfront flavour kick, juicy jammy fruits, seamless texture from ripe tannins and a high alcohol level all existing in perfect balance.

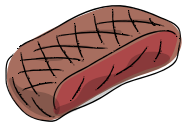
But many drinkers are also embracing the style shift to Shiraz grown in cooler climates. These wines are pure expressions of the variety and allow for more regional distinction to shine through with clarity and concentration. They make ideal food partners and are often harvested earlier to avoid overripe qualities. They have less reliance on new oak to inform the wine's character. Instead they are influenced by techniques such as stem inclusion and whole-bunch fermentation to create texture, and have been given extended maceration to create more supple tannins.

FOOD PAIRINGS

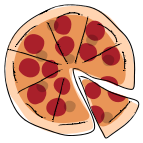




Pork, lamb and beef in casseroles flavoured with wine, onions and spices



Gamey meats such as kangaroo or venison



Salami-topped pizza or beef ragu pasta



Grilled and BBQ meats seasoned with pepper



Intensely flavoured hard cheese, such as cheddar, pecorino or Parmesan, smoked gouda



Dark chocolate (70% cocoa)

FOOD PAIRING

The trick with matching Australian Shiraz to food is to choose ingredients or dishes with flavours that stand up to the power and muscularity of the wine. One factor to note is that the peppery spice in Australian Shiraz works wonders with barbecued meat.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINT

- The Riverland, Riverina and Murray Darling regions produce the most amount of Shiraz in Australia, yet it's their cooler-climate cousins that are gaining fame for their elegant, refined expressions of Shiraz. What do these numbers say about the style of Shiraz people are actually drinking?

AS DIVERSE AS

THE COUNTRY THAT MADE IT

Australia's fine Shiraz wines are an expression of place: a distillation of our distinct terroir, climate and community. Our winemakers are curious by nature, perfecting old concepts and playing with new ideas to create something extraordinary. And that's what makes the future of Shiraz so exciting.



THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIAN SHIRAZ

The status of Shiraz as Australia's number one wine grape looks set to continue well into the future as consumers lap up the easy-drinking, rich, full-bodied styles made by the major commercial brands. But it's the producers who are pushing boundaries to get the best out of the style, creating Shiraz with a beguiling balance of aromatics, flavour, tannins and personality.

Australia's winemaking community is open to ideas both old and new, perfecting traditional techniques and inventing their own ways of doing things. We're unafraid to make adjustments in order to enhance quality and make great wine that we enjoy drinking. And that's what makes the future of Australian Shiraz so exciting.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Australian Shiraz has a rich viticultural history, boasting what are believed to be the world's oldest producing Shiraz vines.
- Australian Shiraz is not reflected by a singular homogenous style. Its range spans the everyday-drinking styles, whose popularity has put Australian wine on the world map, through to premium examples made by the country's most innovative producers.
- Shiraz is relatively adaptable and can be grown in moderate to cool regions as well as warm areas, but thrives in moderate to warm climates.
- Shiraz shines as a single-variety wine, but it has also gained success when blended with Cabernet Sauvignon as a uniquely Australian style, and in GSM.
- Shiraz is also produced into rosé styles and sparkling wine, which is a particularly Australian style.
- South Australia's Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale may lead the charge as the Shiraz powerhouse producers, but other warm-climate and cool-climate regions are nipping at their heels with exciting expressions of Shiraz, such as Heathcote in Victoria and the Canberra District.
- Australian Shiraz has the potential to age for decades, with its high tannin and acid levels, and flavour concentration.

Suggested timings

This module is designed to be taught in one to three hours. How long you spend on each topic – or whether you cover it at all – will depend on your attendees as well as time allocation. Below are two different examples of how you may wish to divide your time.

ONE-HOUR CLASS

Topic	Time
Welcome and introduction	5 mins
The history of Shiraz in Australia	3 mins
How it's grown	3 mins
How it's made	5 mins
Common styles	3 mins
Where it's grown	15 mins
Characteristics and flavour profiles (including tasting)	20 mins
Food and wine pairings	3 mins
Summary and class close	3 mins

THREE-HOUR CLASS

Topic	Time
Welcome and introduction	10 mins
The history of Shiraz in Australia	15 mins
How it's grown	10 mins
How it's made	15 mins
Common styles	20 mins
Where it's grown	20 mins
Break	15 mins
Characteristics and flavour profiles (including tasting)	55 mins
Food and wine pairing	10 mins
Summary and class close	10 mins

SUGGESTED WINES TO TASTE

These are just suggestions – you can select whichever wines best suit your tasting and audience. Wines may or may not be available in your area.

- Clonakilla Canberra District Shiraz Viognier
- Best's Great Western Sparkling Shiraz
- John Duval 'Entity' Barossa Valley Shiraz
- Sons of Eden 'Remus' Old Vine Eden Valley Shiraz
- Paxton 'Jones Block' McLaren Vale Shiraz
- Wakefield 'St. Andrews' Clare Valley Shiraz
- Ochota Barrels 'I am the Owl' Adelaide Hills Syrah
- Tyrrell's Wines 'Vat 9' Hunter Valley Shiraz
- Vasse Felix Margaret River Shiraz
- Castagna 'Genesis' Beechworth Syrah
- Frankland Estate 'Isolation Ridge' Great Southern Shiraz
- Jasper Hill 'Georgia's Paddock' Heathcote Shiraz
- Hentley Farm 'The Quintessential' Barossa Valley Shiraz Cabernet
- Mount Langi Ghiran 'Cliff Edge' Grampians Shiraz



AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED