

MACEDON RANGES WINE

Wines presented by Russell A

Food presented by John W

The Macedon Ranges is a diverse wine region and among the coolest grape growing regions in Australia.

In general the vineyards are located along the Great Dividing Range and stretch from Gisborne in the south to Malmsbury, and from Daylesford to Woodend, Macedon, Romsey and Lancefield.

Given the region's cool climate, heritage pinot noir and chardonnay are the stars however stunning examples of aromatic varieties such as riesling and traditionally warmer climate varieties of cabernet sauvignon and shiraz can be found. Given the strength of pinot noir and chardonnay the region also produces top rate sparkling wine. Some vineyards are now experimenting with Italian varieties such as prosecco and nebbiolo, the French variety Gamay and Austrian grape Gruner Veltliner.

There are more than 40 wineries in the region with Granit Hills, Cope-Williams and Gisborne Peak responsible for re-starting the industry in the 1970's after early wine production in the region ceased circa 1890.

The last few years have been generally very good in the region with the wines from 2017 to be long lived and complex given the exceptionally cool year and long growing season.

The early signs for the 2018 vintage have also been very good.

1. The John Boucher 5 years on lees Macedon Pinot Noir Chardonnay, Kyneton Ridge Estate

Halliday four and a half star winery established in the shadow of the Black Mountain the area is ideal for chardonnay and pinot noir and traditional processes are maintained.

Made in the French "method traditionnelle" style which reflects the quality produced from a low yielding, hand trended vineyard.

James Halliday: - 5 years on lees has conferred an ample core of toasted brioche, truffle and iodine, all qualitative leads to a rich palate. The mineral to acid quotient speaks of baked apple to citrus flavours. A generous sparkling boasting considerable complexity. 94pts.

2. Gisborne Peak Riesling 2017

In 1978 Gisborne Peak owners had a vision to plant grapes in the cool climate Macedon Ranges and to make wines of exceptional character. Today Gisborne Peak Winery has become one of the most celebrated wineries in the region firmly believing that good wine starts in the vineyard.

This Riesling was finished on lees for a couple of months prior to bottling which has produced a soft, luscious mouth feel.

The zesty nose is typical of a young Riesling showing lemons and limes and a hint of green apple, with a fragrant blossom filled bouquet. The palate displays florals. Melons and pears. A truly crisp, clean cool climate Riesling.

Try with anything you can squeeze a lemon over such as fish, shellfish or schnitzel. It also matches herbaceous Thai and Vietnamese food.

Drink now or the mature version in 10 plus years.

3. Granite Hills 1971 Block Riesling 2018

Halliday 5 red star winery and trailblazers of cool climate viticulture and winemaking this winery has won more than 570 awards in Australian and international competitions. They pioneered the successful growing of Riesling and Shiraz in an uncompromising cool climate. The Rieslings age superbly. Granite Hills Winery is an icon of the Macedon Ranges and is particularly well known for their Riesling which is produced from 49 year old vines planted at an elevation of 550 metres. Cool climate viticulture at its finest.

This wine is from a small bottling of Riesling grapes handpicked from the very first block planted to this variety at Granite Hills in 1971. Just 390 dozen bottled.

The wine gives a light yellow hue with a nose of citrus blossom, lime and musk aromatics with the faintest hint of fennel. A pure wine with delicate citrus fruits matched by acidity that gives wonderful contrast and impressive length. There is a honey and spice note that adds some richness on the mid to back palate. This wine will last for decades.

Trophy at the 2019 Victorian Wine Show.

4. Lyons Will Macedon Ranges Chardonnay 2017

Halliday four and a half star winery specialising in chardonnay and pinot noir but now branching out into Riesling and Gamay.

Picked 20 year old vines and processed into wine on 3rd April 2017 this wine is hands on. The fruit was basket pressed, settled overnight and put into French oak barrels with little intervention for 10 months.

James Halliday: There's plenty of acid cut and its light on its feet in general but supple mouthfeel and honeysuckle characters make for seductive drinking. Stone fruits and citrus hold the steering wheel before a long tangy finish. 94 points.

5. Curly Flat Chardonnay 2017

Halliday 5 red star winery.

Our truly cool climate ensures a sublime yet complex expression of Chardonnay that speaks with purity of time and place.

Pale straw in appearance. An aromatic nose of white stone fruit infused with lime blossom and fennel along with hints of struck match and wheatmeal which provide further complexity. The palate of nectarine, white peach and pear merge with grapefruit citrus all lining up to be embraced by the cool charge of acidity. Subtle French oak and creamy lees provide both a savoury and textural frame for luxurious length. In unison these elements form a palate of great vitality while maintaining tension and focus.

James Halliday: This has punch and weight in equal measure. Fuller bodied with stone fruit, lemony tones; creamy and very Moorish thanks to its restrained nutty/lees flavours. There's complexity and a vibrancy to the acidity as it glides effortlessly to its long finish. 95 points

6. Gisborne Peak "Two blocks blend" Pinot Noir 2017

This Pinot is an outstanding example of real cool climate grape growing with fruit that shows the benefit of late autumn ripening.

This vintage is the result of grapes picked from our Top Block and Foundation Block plantings.

This wine has superb balance, depth and texture, rich cherries on the nose, pepper and plums on the palate.

Cellar up to 5 years.

7. Curly Flat Pinot Noir 2017

Curly Flat Pinot Noir represents our passion as wine growers to faithfully capture the essence of our remarkable site coupled with the unique expression that is derived from each vintage.

This wine exhibits fresh violets and dried lavender which entwine with strawberry and black cherry to form a fresh, fragrant peak. Aromas of leather, fresh earth and autumnal undergrowth merge with coniferous notes, oak spice and black pepper all providing a complex savoury base.

Luminous yet mouth filling red and black fruits meet fine suede-like tannin and an undercurrent of cooling acidity.

James Halliday: entices immediately with heady aromas of all-spiced cherries, warm earth. Autumnal leaves and borage. The palate is the clincher. Glossy yet fine tannins, graceful, lithe and long. Lovely wine. 96 points.

8. Granite Hills Shiraz 2014

*****wine of the night*****

A benchmark, cool climate peppery shiraz from small 5 acre vineyard of hand- harvested 40 year old vines. Small batch fermentation techniques were used including hand plunging followed by maturation in French and American oak hogsheads for three years.

From the first vintage in 1978 this Shiraz sets the benchmark for peppery shiraz, renowned for its definitive flavour, balance, structure and ability to age gracefully in the bottle.

There is a blackberry and blackcurrant nose given aromatic support from the oak that provides generosity and depth.

The palate is rich, mouth filling and complete. It finishes long, with a final grip of fine tannins and persistent spicy fruit flavours. The palate builds with unsweetened liquorice, blackberry and a dusting of white pepper.