



the  
great  
australian

red

# *Australia's national treasure*

## The Great Australian Red

Shiraz Cabernet is **The Great Australian Red**. First championed in Australia in the late 1800s as generic "claret", the blend of Shiraz and Cabernet was resurrected in the 1950s. By 1962, Max Schubert, the creator of Grange, had made what he himself named the best wine of his illustrious career. A blend of Coonawarra Cabernet and Barossa Shiraz, 1962 Penfolds Bin 60A is now Penfolds' most successful show wine of all time, and has on countless occasions been heralded as the greatest Australian red wine ever made.

Over the ensuing decades, the direction of red winemaking in this country was changed forever by the profound impact of this wine and hundreds of others which shared a similar formula. Schubert and his contemporaries were convinced of the potential of Cabernet, both on its own and as a blending partner for Shiraz. By the mid-1970s, the blend was rife across the landscape of the Australian wine industry.

But that was thirty years ago, and a long way from the frenetic pace of the industry today. Australia now churns out tens of thousands of labels every year. How many of these represent blends of Shiraz and Cabernet? Merely a few hundred.

If many of the greatest wines that this country has ever produced are Shiraz Cabernet blends, why don't we see more made today? It seems that the blend has slipped out of the limelight, in the wake of the rise of Shiraz Viognier and an entourage of alternative red varietals. We have created **The Great Australian Red**, a new wine competition, to shift this focus back to our unique icon.

The Shiraz Cabernet blend is an Australian institution. This country championed it, refined it, and still does it better than anyone else on the planet. It's our only unique, definitive red. This is Australia's national treasure of the red wine world, and it deserves to be recognised and celebrated as Australia's greatest red wine.

## *the future depends on it*



The future of Australia's wine industry depends on it just as much as has its past. Tapping into the strength of our past and framing it as the unique draw-card of the future, which rival winemaking countries simply cannot replicate, the Shiraz Cabernet blend is the secret weapon to take the Australian wine industry into its next era. **The Great Australian Red** is free of the constraints of region, price and style, drawing together great examples of all styles, at all price points, from almost every Australian state.

The present Australian wine industry is in need of a trigger to bring its attention back to the blend so crucial to its history and future.

**The Great Australian Red** is an innovative wine competition to encourage, identify and promote Shiraz Cabernet blends. Again this year, we assembled a formidable team of judges to work alongside us to find the greatest examples of the blend made today. **The Great Australian Red** has put the Shiraz Cabernet blend back into the focus of Australia – and the world.

### the judges

The judging panel for **The Great Australian Red 2007** was:

- Tim James — Wirra Wirra (Chair of Judges)
- Matthew Jukes — Wine Writer, UK
- Tyson Stelzer — Wine Writer, Brisbane
- Rob Mann — Winemaker, Cape Mentelle
- Tash Mooney — Winemaker, Fox Gordon
- Louisa Rose — Chief Winemaker, Yalumba
- Dan Buckle — Winemaker, Mt Langi Ghiran
- Marty Edwards — The Lane
- Stuart Knox — Fix St James
- Andy Lincoln — Wineaway
- Katie MacAulay — Lion Nathan
- Amelia Pinsent — Country Life Magazine

# very high point of winemaking

## judge's comments

The blend of Shiraz and Cabernet is on an upward trajectory in Australia at the moment. **The Great Australian Red 2007** awarded a higher proportion of gold medals, a higher proportion of silver medals and a higher proportion of bronze medals than the inaugural 2006 competition. This is a direct reflection of the standard of this blend in Australia this year.

While the 2006 competition permitted the entry of Shiraz-based wines with a small addition of Cabernet and vice-versa, we figured that it didn't make sense that a wine bottled simply as 'Shiraz' or 'Cabernet' could win **The Great Australian Red**! We tightened up the entry conditions this year to restrict **The Great Australian Red** only to wines which were labelled as 'Shiraz Cabernet' or 'Cabernet Shiraz'. By Australian laws, this necessitates at least 15% of each variety.

The change proved to be more significant than we expected, lifting the average standard of the wines at every level of the competition.

The skilful blending at the upper level of this competition represents a very high point of wine-making in Australia.

*Dan Buckle, Judge, The Great Australian Red 2007*

Of 110 entries, medals were awarded to 63 wines comprising 7 Gold, 20 Silver and 36 Bronze. 5 trophies were awarded.

The *greatest* expression of the blend of Cabernet and Shiraz is to be found in South Australia's traditional winemaking regions of the Barossa, Clare, McLaren Vale and Langhorne Creek. The experience garnered over generations of growing both varieties in these warm and forgiving climates consistently produces the most complete and balanced examples.

*Robert Mann, Judge, The Great Australian Red 2007*

*you should be ashamed*



## screwed, corked or stuffed?

**The Great Australian Red 2007** again utilised our unique system of judging, with two distinct judging panels simultaneously and independently assessing the same wines on different tables. This process revealed even more **disturbing discrepancies** between bottles than it did last year.

Of the 220 bottles opened (2 bottles each of 110 wines), 146 were sealed with screw cap, 70 with cork and the remaining 4 were in aluminium cans. Replacement bottles were called in for **20 faulty bottles**, 3 of which were screw-capped (representing 2% variation) and 17 were corked (24.3% variation)!

While discrepancies between bottles can occur for a wide range of reasons (even under screw cap – so be sure to request a replacement bottle if a wine ever tastes **suspect**), cork taint remains the biggest threat by miles.

**And it gets worse.** In the results above, we haven't included any of the replacement bottles. In two wines under cork, three bottles in a row were cork-tainted. In another wine, four bottles in a row, and in a different vintage of the same wine, three in a row.

**This is utterly appalling!** If cork companies have really solved the problem (as they keep telling us they have), why did we find nearly one in four wines destroyed by cork? Winemakers, you should be ashamed of yourselves, too. There are many excellent alternatives to natural cork available, so you have no excuse for this any longer.

Consumers, we've listed the closure next to every bottle in **The Best 365 Wines of 2008**. You know what to do.

## results

### The Trophy winners are:

The Great Australian Red 2007 is  
**Wolf Blass Wines Black Label 2004**

The Openbook Australia Trophy  
for the best wine under \$20:  
**The Yalumba Wine Company  
Barossa Cabernet Shiraz 2006**

The Procork Trophy  
for the best wine over \$50:  
**Bremerton Wines Best of Vintage  
Shiraz Cabernet 2004**

The Wine Appointments Group Trophy  
for the best Shiraz-dominant blend:  
**Jim Barry Wines PB Reserve  
Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon 2005**

The Alcan Packaging Stelvin Trophy  
for the best Cabernet-dominant blend:  
**Wolf Blass Wines Black Label 2004**

Special thanks to the sponsors of  
**The Great Australian Red 2007:**



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wine industry appointments

All trophy winners will be presented with limited edition framed prints of Dr Cameron Stelzer's oil on canvas, the second in **The Great Australian Red** series. Trophy presentations and tastings of the winning wines will occur in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth in November 2007. See [www.thegreataustralianred.com](http://www.thegreataustralianred.com) for full details



## The Gold Medal winners are:

Bremerton Wines Best of Vintage Shiraz Cabernet 2004  
Jim Barry PB Reserve Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon 2005  
Kaesler Wines 2006 WOMS 2006  
Mildara Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz 2004  
Yalumba Wine Company Barossa Cabernet Shiraz 2006  
Wolf Blass Wines Black Label 2004  
Wolf Blass Wines Black Label 2003

## The Silver Medal winners are:

Blue Pyrenees Estate Reserve Red 2002  
David Franz Alexander's Reward Cabernet Shiraz 2002  
DogRidge Wine Company 'THE PUP' 2005  
Flaxman Wines The Stranger 2005  
Fox Gordon Cabernet Shiraz 2006  
Jacob's Creek Wines Johann Shiraz Cabernet 2001  
Jacob's Creek Wines Johann Shiraz Cabernet 2002  
Lake Breeze Wines 'Bernoota' 2005  
Majella Wines The Musician by Majella 2006  
McWilliams Wines 1877 Cabernet Shiraz 2005  
Murdock Wine The Merger 2004  
Murdock Wines The Merger 2005  
Neagles Rock Vineyards "Mr Duncan" 2005  
Penfolds Wines Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz 2005  
Penfolds Wines Cellar Reserve Cabernet Shiraz 2004  
Scarpantoni Estate Wines Reserve 2005  
Stella Bella Wines Skuttlebutt 2005  
The Yalumba Wine Company The Signature 2004  
Ulithorne Paternus 2006  
Woodstock Five Feet 2004

## The Bronze Medal winners are:

Abbey Rock Wines "The Abbey" Shiraz Cabernet 2006  
Anvers Wine Brabo 2006  
Anvers Wine Razorback Road 2005  
Bleasdale Vineyards Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon 2004  
Boggy Creek Vineyards 2004

Bremerton Wines 2003 Best of Vintage Cab Shiraz 2003  
Chalice Bridge Estate Ltd 2004  
David Franz Alexander's Reward Cabernet Shiraz 2003  
Evans and Tate Classic Red 2005  
Ferngrove Vineyards Estate "The Stirlings" 2004  
Frankland Estate Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon 2005  
Gentle Annie Wines 2003  
Glaetzer Wines Godolphin by Ben Glaetzer 2005  
Grant Burge Wines Nebuchadnezzar 2003  
Hoffmann's Wine 2005  
Jacob's Creek Russet Ridge Cabernet Shiraz Merlot 2003  
Jip Jip Rocks 2006  
Jules\* by Mortimers of Orange 2005  
Kabminye Wines 2004  
Longview Vineyard 'Red Bucket' Shiraz Cabernet 2006  
Loom Wine Soaring Kite 2005  
Majella Wines Malleea by Majella 2004  
McLean's Farm Wines Barossa Cabernet Shiraz 2005  
McWilliams Wines 1877 Cabernet Shiraz 2003  
McWilliams Wines 1877 Cabernet Shiraz 2004  
Mitchelton Wines Thomas Mitchell Cabernet Shiraz 2006  
Passing Clouds 2004  
Penfolds Wines Koonunga Hill Shiraz Cabernet Sauv 2005  
Rookery Wines Cabernet Shiraz 2004  
Shaw Vineyard Estate Cabernet Shiraz 2004  
The Yalumba Wine Company FDR1A 2004  
Vasse Felix Classic Dry Red 2005  
Watershed Premium Wines Ltd SHADES 2005  
Were Estate Shiraz Cabernet 2005  
Wyndham Estate George Wyndham Shiraz Cab 2005  
Wynns Coonawarra Estate Johnsons Block Shiraz  
Cabernet Sauvignon 2004

**The Great Australian Red Dinner 2007** featured the greatest Shiraz wines of France, Australia, Italy and New Zealand. Our judges were joined by esteemed guests including James Halliday, Steve Webber and Ken Gargett, who contributed to a rousing round-table discussion on finesse and regionality in Shiraz styles.