



Australia's Benchmarks

by Harvey Steiman October 15, 2007

**25 world-class
reds and whites that
define the country's
best**

Wine Spectator

"With more than 2,000 wineries spread across a landmass that's nearly the size of the United States, Australia produces an amazingly diverse range of wines, from mass-market quaffers to dessert-style nectars that wow you with their richness and refinement..."

KAESLER Shiraz Old Bastard

Kaesler Vineyards & Winery, Barossa Valley, South Australia

Website: www.kaesler.com.au **Average case production** 500 cases **Winery production** 25,000 cases **Current vintage** 2004; 95 points, \$135, 500 cases made

Best recent vintages (pts.) 2002 (94), 2001 (96)

Kaesler's history goes back to 1893, when a family of Silesian immigrants by that name planted vineyards in the heart of Barossa Valley. Over the years the property was broken up, but a chance meeting in Bordeaux between Australian winemaker Reid Bosward and Swiss banker Edouart Peter led to the partnership that bought 60 acres of the remaining parcels in 1999 and 2001. Old Bastard is made from the three surviving acres of the original 1893 Shiraz vines.

"The vineyard had been farmed to within an inch of its life," sighs Bosward. "We cut way back on irrigation and reduced the yield by 40 percent to get the intensity we wanted." What distinguishes Old Bastard is that it balances the intensity and richness of classic Barossa plum and fruitcake character with refined tannins and elegance from judicious acidity. Even in a hot, challenging vintage like 2003, Old Bastard delivers flavors that feel fresh, not dried or stewed, which tells you a lot about the quality in a good growing season.

Other wines of note: Two other Shiraz-based wines, The Bogan (\$58) and Old Vine (\$58), offer similar power if not quite the refinement of Old Bastard. Stonehorse GSM (\$19), a blend of Grenache, Shiraz and Mourvedre, delivers crowdpleasing fruit and polish.

