

HUON HOOKE  
WINE

# Shiraz makers shine

EVERY year, the wine industry bible *The Australian And New Zealand Wine Industry Directory* reports a rise in the number of Australian wine producers, usually about 10 per cent. This year, the directory notes producers – not all have wineries – are up by 7.1 per cent. The total is 2299, an increase of 153 from last year, although there are many more than the directory lists: most weeks I look up someone new and fail to find them.

Exciting new producers are continually appearing, too many for we scribes to acknowledge. Many of their most impressive wines are shiraz, which is no surprise: it's Australia's signature grape. One-fifth of the samples I receive are shiraz, which is a bit frustrating as it doesn't give a balanced view of the market.

What excites me most is seeing a new shiraz producer fielding two or more regional wines. Jamsheed is one such. It is a Melbourne label with three versions of 2006 shiraz: Yarra Valley, Heathcote and Grampians. All are excellent, complex wines with alcohol levels well in check – the Grampians is 14.5 per cent; the others 13.5 per cent – and all taste different.

The winemaker, Gary Mills, has leased a winery in Healesville; it also acts as a contract winemaker for other producers and pinot noir specialist William Downie leases a corner of it to make his eponymous wines.

Perth-born Mills's history includes a 2½-year stint at the Japanese-owned Ridge winery in California – he speaks fluent Japanese – and time at Amberley Estate in Margaret River.

His Heathcote wine, rich and sweet-fruited (90/100), is from the distinguished Kennedy vineyard and totals just 120 cases – as does the Grampians wine, sourced from the old Garden Gully vineyard at Great Western. This is sturdier and a mix of



Flavour of the month ... Jamsheed winemaker Gary Mills. Photo: Eddie Jim

savoury, earthy and spicy, with plenty of tannin and the structure to age (92/100).

The Yarra Valley wine, from a cool high-altitude vineyard at Silvan, totals 250 cases and is the lightest, finest and most perfumed, with peppery spices and a graphite influence from the 80 per cent whole bunches, with stalks, that went into the fermenter (93/100). All are \$37.

Eden Road is the first glimpse of what is set to be a major player, with former McWilliam's winemaker Martin Cooper – a past winner of the Qantas Medal for young winemaker of the year – at the helm. His company has a long-term lease on the former Hardys Kamberra winery in Canberra and has bought the established, 80-hectare, formerly Southcorp-owned Tralee vineyard at Tumbarumba. From the '08 vintage this will be the company's powerhouse, producing chardonnay and pinot noir under the Tumbarumba Hills label. There will also be Hilltops shiraz, nebbiolo, sangiovese and cabernet and a Canberra shiraz.

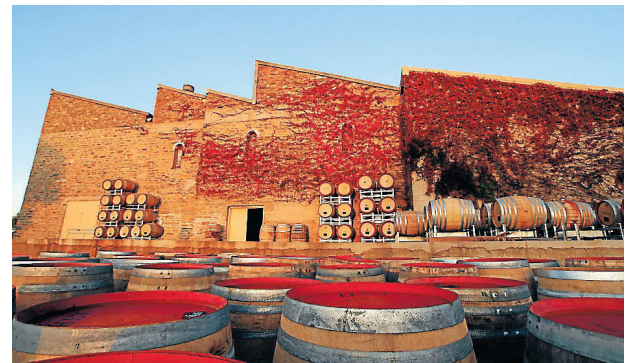
The company owns the former Hamilton winery and vineyard at Springton in the Eden Valley, which is the source of the first wines to be released next month: Eden Road Vo6 Shiraz (95/100; \$220) and Eden Road Two Trees Grenache Shiraz '06 (91/100; \$75). The shiraz, off vines more than 100 years old, has deep colour and vibrant red berry, floral and spice aromas coupled with vanillan-

charred oak, sweetly lush and powerful on the palate: a full-bodied style with terrific cellaring prospects. The grenache blend is at the ultra-ripe end of the scale, with generous sweet fruit, alcohol and a hint of port. Ultimo Wine Centre will stock them both.

Maverick, the name of Tokyo-based Ron Brown's Barossa wines, gives an insight into how the man sees himself. Brown is the indefatigable owner of the Japan Wine Challenge, a spin-off of the UK-based International Wine Challenge. He and his partners own 40 hectares of vineyards in the Barossa and Eden valleys. They include the established Trial Hill, in a high part of the Eden Valley region, where he gets the grapes for his riesling and flagship shiraz.



Corkers ... young gun winemaker Martin Cooper and his Eden Road winery.



## Red, steady, go ...

**Jamsheed** phone 0409 540 414  
or see [www.jamsheed.com.au](http://www.jamsheed.com.au).  
**Eden Road** phone (08) 8568 1766  
or see [www.edenroadwines.com.au](http://www.edenroadwines.com.au).  
**Maverick**  
see [www.maverickwines.com.au](http://www.maverickwines.com.au).  
**Rocland Estate** phone 08 8562 2142  
or see [www.rocland.com.au](http://www.rocland.com.au).

He has built a new winery at Vine Vale and has a range of reds plus the riesling on the market. The standard is very high indeed. As we might expect from the Barossa, the reds are at the big end of town but are bright and well-made. I have reviewed some of these wines before and liked all of them, especially the '06 Twins Grenache Shiraz Mourvedre (93/100; \$26). It is very rich, loaded with concentrated floral-herby raspberry grenache-led fruit and pushes the alcohol a bit – the label reads 15 per cent. There is also the '06 Twins Shiraz (92/100; \$26) – rich and firm, and loaded with aniseed, vanillin and jammy ultra-ripe flavours; the '05 Trial Hill Shiraz, a massive blackberry-dark-plum-flavoured blockbuster with lots of grip, density and guts – which is very good but needs more time (94/100; \$55); and the '07 Trial Hill Riesling, with straw-grassy and mineral aromas, and a very lively citrus-like tang on the palate, which will be best in one to five years (92/100; \$25).

Rocland Estate is small and new. Franc Rocca came to the wine business from cut flowers, specialising in carnations and lisianthus. He has a winery and small vineyard on the Sturt Highway at Nuriootpa. His winemaker, Peter Gajewski, nicknamed Juicy, is ex-Penfolds and the two wines I've tasted to date have been very good.

The '06 Rocland Estate Lot 147 Shiraz is a statuesque red in big, bold but well-made modern Barossa style: very good, although the vines are young at eight years (94/100; \$28). The second '06 shiraz, Kilroy Was Here, is an earlier drinking but still flavour-packed, robust red (92/100; \$20). Its name refers to the US military habit of scrawling "Kilroy was here" graffiti wherever they travelled and, according to Rocca, is "all about making your mark in the world". Which is exactly what Rocland Estate is doing.

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