

Hartz Barn WINES



IT FEELS LIKE there isn't a day passes by where we don't hear about the emergence of a new producer of wine in this country. This may seem like an exaggeration, but in fact this statement is not far from the actual truth. With a new producer appearing in Australia approximately every 72 hours, and already over 1700 flooding the marketplace, one wonders how long this trend is sustainable. Already the tide of prosperity seems to be turning within the wine industry. In Western Australia there are presently over 34 vineyards for sale, and the trend elsewhere shows similarities to the Western Australian reality. Yet among all this negativity some small producers do thrive, and do present something new and worthwhile to the Australian wine marketplace. Such a producer is Hartz Barn in the Barossa Valley of South Australia.

Hartz Barn was established in 1997, by Penny Hart and David Barnett. Penny is the CEO of the business, and David is the winemaker. This family owned business within the village of Moculta, is in the Eden Valley of South Australia. The varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, and Merlot are planted at their Dennistone Vineyard. Riesling and an Italian variety called Lagrein (whose home is in the Trentino Alto Adige region in Northern Italy) are some of the more recent plantings. At an elevation of 359 metres above sea level, the warm to hot days throughout the growing season are tempered by cooler evenings. This combined with well drained loamy soils with a subsoil of clay, present a perfect profile to grow quality grapes of distinction. It is the red wines of this estate that demand the greatest attention. I have been fortunate to taste the wines of Hartz Barn over the last few years, and the quality is on a sharp upward rise from its already substantial quality base. The recent wines that crossed my desk were from the fabled 2002 vintage. Here is an excerpt from a letter I sent to David and Penny after experiencing their three reds; the Hartz Barn Mailbox Merlot, the General Store Shiraz, and the Carriages Cabernet Sauvignon.

"What struck me in general about all three wines was the wonderful balance, with fine integration of fruit and physiologically ripe tannins. The cliché "iron fist in a silk glove" is probably quite apt here particularly for the Shiraz and the Cabernet Sauvignon ... These are the best quality wines I have seen produced from your estate. Congratulations".

All Hartz Barn red wines are matured in hogshead oak barrels made from French and or American plantation oak timber. The Shiraz in my mind has always been the outstanding pick, and in this vintage this has proven to be so once again.

The tasting notes (right) for the three classic reds produced here speak for themselves in terms of the qualities of these wonderful wines.

What is unusual about these wines in how well the powerful fruit and tannins have been handled, and the elegance achieved in what was a blockbuster year.

It will be interesting to see how this estate performs in the future. There is no doubt that the attention to detail and the passion to achieve is paramount in the pursuit of quality. If the wines are a reflection of the producers, then I feel we have much to look forward to at Hartz Barn. If you are stimulated to seek out their wines the reasonable prices will also please you. **HL**

Dr. Ron Georgiou MW is a Master of Wine. He heads an independent wine consultancy company called the Wine Oracle.

2002 Hartz Barn Mailbox Merlot (14.4% alc)

This is one of the best balanced Merlots I have tasted this year. Deep, black, cherry red in colour with a heady nose of plum and cedar. The oak here is a fine counterpoint to the spiciness of the plummy fruit. The palate is round and intense with black cherry and other black fruits forming a wonderful complex melange. This is a silky, sensuous wine with ripe textured fruit and seamless structure. The mouthfeel is full, sweet and rich with significant length which finishes with a kiss of chocolate. Why wait to enjoy this, drink now to two years. **92/100**

2002 Hartz Barn General Store Shiraz (14.4 % alc)

Deep black plum in colour with an amazing aroma of chocolate vanilla and black fruit. The palate is sexy indeed with intense blackberries and black pepper combining with wonderful chewy tannins to create artistry in a glass. The clever combination of maturation in French and American oak has paid off handsomely. Already beautifully integrated, this wine will continue to improve with 2-6 years of cellaring. This is a high quality, serious Shiraz for hedonists at heart. **94/100**

2002 Hartz Barn Carriages Cabernet Sauvignon (14.4% alc)

Medium to deep purple red in colour. The nose is distinctly in the earthy/coffee spectrum. The palate is textured with firm tannins and rich cassis fruit. Structurally the wine is beautifully powerful yet refined with finely grained tannins giving the wine a real presence and elegance; the fruit ripeness adding underlying richness. Two to six years of cellaring will allow the wine to integrate beautifully. **90/100**

