

MATTHEW JUKES  
A PREVIEW OF THE NEW RELEASES  
APRIL 2023



T O R B R E C K

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*If you think that Barossa whites and reds might not be your sort of 'thing', think again. There are flavour and texture triggers found in these wines that are deeply embedded in the greatest Rhônes, Burgundies, Bordeaux, and Piemonte creations, and yet these wines have definition and precision that make them irresistibly compelling and genuinely unique.*

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20++

### 2018 THE LAIRD

**RATING:** 20++/20  
**FROM:** Barossa Valley, South Australia  
**VARIETY:** Shiraz

It is funny how truly great wines make me think of another other than wine. When I first inhaled the scent of 2018 The Laird, I heard music, which was somewhat unnerving. The phenomenal perfume here conjured up Mendelssohn's Fingal's Cave – a distant musical memory from my youth. I have never seen this famous sea cave firsthand, so I searched for it on my phone while diving into this glass. If this wine looks like any marine geological formation, it must be this incredible cavern on the uninhabited island of Staffa. It is fantastic to think that Mendelssohn sat in a boat, off Staffa, in 1829 and penned a couple of bars of music inspired by this cave. Some 15 years later, the first vines were planted in Barossa. I suppose it is somewhat of a tradition for me not to bang on about fruit, flowers, herbs and spices when writing about tremendously moving wines preferring to take my readers to a more emotional place in the hope that they are moved enough to seek out the subject of my musings. In this instance, I cannot get over my Fingal's Cave spark, and I think it sums up the absurdly deep and never-ending joy that this sublime wine imbues in its taster.  
Drink 2030 – 2050



### 2020 RUN RIG

**RATING:** 20+/20  
**FROM:** Barossa Valley, South Australia  
**VARIETY:** Shiraz Viognier

SI have tasted (and bought) this wine back to the 1996 vintage, so I am familiar with its mood swings and changeable temperament. In 2020 Runrig is an MMA thoroughbred with an awe-inspiring power-to-weight ratio and a brooding, ever-so-slightly scary degree of intensity balanced by cathedral-like calm. This is the finest ever young Runrig I have tasted, and if you fancy another tenuous mental image, then this is the darkest of night skies with no moon in evidence at all. You cannot even see your hand in front of your face, and when you taste this wine, it seems like it is the only wine in the world. Unlike The Factor, it is closed, commanding, immovable and all-encompassing, but there are the very first hints of pliability and tenderness appearing along its flanks. When this wine starts to unwind, it will undoubtedly reveal more chapters of fruit than any Runrig before it and I imagine it will run for decades such is its pedigree. If any wine in this line-up left me breathless, it is 2020 Runrig.  
Drink 2029 – 2045

20



### 2020 DESCENDANT

**RATING:** 20/20

**FROM:** Barossa Valley, South Australia

**VARIETY:** Shiraz Viognier

Gobsmacking. I have long adored this wine and have often sung its praises from the rooftops. However, I never thought it could capture my senses in the way it does in 2020. A raptor on nose and palate, locking on without a moment's hesitation, there is an insane iodine and black fruit perfume here that conjures up images of the most dementedly talented perfumier going to work with the rarest musks and scents imaginable. The sense of heady Balkan tobacco alone is hypnotic. I have waited a long time for this wine to move from 'high-gold' level to perfection and this graduation happened in one fell swoop in 2020. So few Syrahs/ Shirazes on the planet can do what this wine does, both from an aromatic standpoint and from a sheer hedonistic and seductive stance. This is an incredible creation and I am thrilled to inform you that it can be approached and enjoyed next year such is the aromatic bliss and ambassadorial fruit welcome that 2020 The Descendant offers the drinker. Drink 2024 – 2035

19.5<sup>+</sup>

### 2020 THE FACTOR

**RATING:** 19.5+/20

**FROM:** Barossa Valley, South Australia

**VARIETY:** Shiraz

2020 The Factor is the fashion world's equivalent of a midnight black ballgown, brimming with CGI detail. This is Australia's Hermitage but blacker, more mineral-drenched, more focussed and, believe it or not, less seemingly tannic and terrifying. The Factor is all about the most luxurious textures and the most incredible control. It is a rich and layered wine, but it shows no trace of excess or ebullience. It is the epitome of measured fruit, lock-step organisation and thrilling symmetry. In the Factor, Runrig, Laird triumvirate, this is the most approachable and kindly of the three wines, but it is also a mighty creation with Mensa-like detail and mind-bending length. Drink 2026 – 2040

### 2021 THE STEADING

**RATING:** 18.5+/20

**FROM:** Barossa Valley, South Australia

**VARIETY:** Grenache, Mourvèdre, Shiraz

The Steading (Rouge) is the ravishing Blanc's perfectly balanced, mirror-image relation. 2021 is most definitely a sleeper vintage for this imperious and staggeringly good-value GSM hero. With this possesses a more chiselled figure than the deliciously forward 2020 vintage (which is currently enjoying rave reviews on my 100 Best UK Roadshow), this is two shades darker, more luxurious, centred and calm, and it reeks of couture treatment from its tip to its toe. Beautiful. Drink 2024 – 2030

19<sup>+</sup>

### 2021 THE STRUIE

**RATING:** 19+/20

**FROM:** Barossa, South Australia

**VARIETY:** Shiraz

My mind went into orbit when I tasted this wine. Tasting like a magical concoction of 4-parts Serralunga d'Alba and 1-part Bonnes-Mares (Morey-side), this wine's 43% Eden Valley Shiraz component makes it the most energetic, challenging, and utterly mesmerising vintage I can remember. I have always been a Struie fan, but it often sits down in the pack alongside some of the more powerful Shirazes, so one has to look deep into the portfolio to truly appreciate its charms. In 2021, while it is not a bigger wine, it is undoubtedly more intense and aeons longer on the finish, so I can see it standing shoulder to shoulder with its more fêted siblings for years to come. Drink 2024 – 2035

### 2020 LES AMIS

**RATING:** 18.5+/20

**FROM:** Barossa Valley, South Australia

**VARIETY:** Grenache

This is a wine that I often find too intense, extreme and concentrated, and in 2020 it has some of these traits, but it also shows uncommon control and reserve. There is still the trademark, glossy, almost ice-creamy texture in common with the muscular grunt that Les Amis has in spades. Still, exotic, kirsch-like qualities here make this a more challenging and intricately assembled wine than I have ever seen under this label. Drink 2025 – 2032

“ FROM THE AFFORDABLE PRICES TO THE ELITE COLLECTOR'S ITEMS WINES, TORBRECK PAYS AS MUCH ATTENTION TO EVERY WINE, AND IT SHOWS. ”

MATTHEW JUKES - 100 BEST AUSTRALIAN WINES 2022/23

18.5+



### 2021 WOODCUTTER'S SHIRAZ

**RATING:** 18.5+/20  
**FROM:** Barossa Valley, South Australia  
**VARIETY:** Shiraz

Goodness me, this is an awesome wine. I noted in my 100 Best Australian Wines 2022/23 Report that 2020 Woodcutter's Shiraz was a gamechanger for Torbreck, and for a £25 wine, it is hard to think of another red wine made from this statesmanlike grape that comes close, but I am humbled by the sensational layering and presence of this extraordinary 2021 vintage. Much of the power and complexity sits right at the back of the experience, leaving a grand finish that reminds me of only a handful of epic St Joseph. Woodcutter's is a fresh and long wine that gathers more structure and grip without ever including overt tannin or astringency. This is a standout Shiraz, not least if you desire a Torbreck experience with a budget price point.  
 Drink 2024 – 2030

### 2021 HILLSIDE VINEYARD GRENACHE

**RATING:** 18.5/20  
**FROM:** Barossa Valley, South Australia  
**VARIETY:** Grenache

I have followed this cuvée closely since it burst into 100 Best Australian Wines with the 2017 vintage – a cool, calm and supremely well-balanced wine. A far cry from the sweeter, head-banging Grenache styles that crowd the market, this vineyard seems to embody sensuality and fragrance without being simply a wine of ephemeral appeal. A Turkish Delight scent leads the way with a medium-weight palate, polished to perfection, with the rosewater and mulberry theme running the length of the palate marked by mouth-watering acidity. It is hard to wipe the smile off one's face while tasting this melodic and generous wine.  
 Drink 2024 – 2030

### 2021 CUVÉE JUVENILES

**RATING:** 18/20  
**FROM:** Barossa Valley, South Australia  
**VARIETY:** Grenache, Mataro, Carignan, Counoise, Shiraz

Many years ago, this wine started its life as a tribute to my favourite wine/bar restaurant in Paris, but today it is a world-class leader in Grenache/Mataro (Mourvèdre) circles. This is because it is one of the crunchiest and most lifted of this band of gastro-brigands, and yet it manages to pack a memorable punch without any residual oak, tannin or alcohol spoiling the view. Carignan and Counoise play a vital part here, and the Shiraz component has been whittled down to a mere 2% in the mix, signalling a complete departure from a clumsier GSM model. Spicy, cool, moreish and pricked with tasty herb and spice details, this is a winning Juveniles.  
 Drink now – 2028

### 2022 CUVÉE JUVENILES

**RATING:** 18/20  
**FROM:** Barossa Valley, South Australia  
**VARIETY:** Grenache, Mataro, Counoise Carignan

The 2022 vintage has yet to hit the market, but it holds hands with its delicious 2021 predecessor while further emphasising the Counoise and Carignan in its recipe. With increased perfume, finer detail, decreased ripeness, and more bounce, this is as 'smashable' as baby-fine-wine gets and marks 2022 as the definitive, modern Juves for cool, modern palates.  
 Drink 2023 – 2028



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