



T O R B R E C K

BAROSSA VALLEY

AUSTRALIA: EXCITING NEW RELEASES

Torbreck, under chief winemaker Ian Hongell, continues to go from strength to strength.

I recently tasted through this lineup of wines scheduled for March 2019 release (the knockout 2016 RunRig will come out in June) and came away believing that the wines have never been better.

That's not to slight any of his predecessors, just that with his fresh perspective, additional investments in renovating and developing vineyards (viticulturist Nigel Blieschke deserves a lot of that credit) and a renewed commitment to excellence, even the inexpensive cuvées are looking impressive. Having seen a few barrel samples of the higher end 2018s, I can hardly wait for my next trip to the Barossa.

JOE CZERWINSKI

Robert Parker
WINE ADVOCATE

100

2016 RUNRIG

RATING: 100

FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia

VARIETY: Shiraz, Viognier

A blend of 98% Shiraz and 2% Viognier made just prior to bottling, **the 2016 RunRig is a complete masterpiece.** It kicks off with elegant notes of pencil shavings accenting blueberries and blackberries on the nose, then shows incredible, palate-staining intensity of fruit in the mouth. **It's full-bodied, plush and velvety without being unstructured** and manages to be fruit-forward yet savory on the long-lasting finish, where it picks up hints of mocha and black olives. This should be drinkable with pleasure throughout its entire two decade life (it may live longer from cold cellars or in larger formats), but if I were lucky enough to have a bottle or two, I'd try the first one about 10 years out.



97



97

2016 DESCENDANT

RATING: 97

FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia

VARIETY: Shiraz, Viognier

A blend of 94% Shiraz and 6% Viognier aged in second fill barriques (all French oak), the 2016 Descendant features lovely floral aromas, accented by blueberries and a hint of apricot. On the palate, it's full-bodied, rich and creamy in texture, hugely mouthfilling yet somehow without excessive weight or heat, while the plush, velvety finish adds a hint of dark chocolate. It's a terrific success at a still-reasonable price for the quality.

2016 THE FACTOR

RATING: 97

FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia

VARIETY: Shiraz

Torbreck's 2016 The Factor incorporates what winemaker Ian Hongell calls their "most structured Shiraz, from a lot of ironstone soils." It spends two years in French oak barriques, half of which were new, so it shows hints of cedar pencil shavings and toasted coconut layered over ripe blackberries and spice. Full-bodied, rich and velvety, it finishes long, with terrific energy and drive. It should prove to be one of the longest-lived wines from this lineup.



94

2017 THE STRUIE

RATING: 94
FROM: Barossa Valley, Eden Valley
South Australia
VARIETY: Shiraz

A blend of Barossa Valley (79%) and Eden Valley (21%) fruit aged 18 months in 30% new French oak, Torbreck's 2017 The Struie is another one of the values to be had from this producer. Marked by pronounced floral and blueberry notes, this full-bodied, creamy-textured sexpot is rich and concentrated, with just enough spice to keep the palate engaged through the long, velvety finish.

2017 CUVÉE JUVENILES

RATING: 90
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: Grenache, Mataro, Shiraz

All tank-aged, the 2017 Cuvée Juveniles is a blend of 61% Grenache, 28% Mataro and 11% Shiraz. It features delicate strawberry aromas, followed by a medium to full-bodied palate that's creamy and lush. This fruit-driven puppy is easy to knock back, with just a hint of espresso adding a savory edge to the finish.



93

2017 THE GASK

RATING: 93
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: Shiraz

Sourced from two vineyards in the Eden Valley, Torbreck's 2017 The Gask combines hints of violets, blueberries and licorice on the nose. It's medium to full-bodied, with a firm, slightly dusty tannin structure and savory notes of espresso and black olive on the finish. It's distinct in style from the other Torbreck offerings, true to its place of origin.

2017 HILLSIDE VINEYARD SHIRAZ ROUSSANNE

RATING: 92
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: Shiraz, Roussanne

A terrific value in the Torbreck lineup is the 2017 Hillside Vineyard Shiraz Roussanne, a 600-case bottling formerly known as The Loon. It's a blend of 93% Shiraz and 7% Roussanne that spent 12 months in French oak hogsheads. Blueberries, raspberries, flowers and a bit of tar mingle on the nose, while the palate is full-bodied, rich and concentrated, with a plush, velvety finish.

2018 WOODCUTTER'S SEMILLON

RATING: 91
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: Semillon

From vines planted in the 1890s, the 2018 Woodcutter's Semillon represents a true bargain for a chance to taste the product of centenarian vines. It's 30% barrel fermented but in old wood and with the malolactic blocked to retain the most freshness possible. Pear and lemon aromas appear on the nose, while the medium to full-bodied palate is plump and silky but also crisp and long, with lovely focus and some pleasant, pithy notes.



93

2017 THE STEADING

RATING: 93
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: Grenache, Mataro, Shiraz

The 2017 The Steading offers consumers a mid-priced chance to sample the Torbreck style. A blend of 51% Grenache, 25% Shiraz and 24% Mataro, it matured 18 months in a large foudre. Black cherries, anise and cracked pepper all appear on the nose, while the full-bodied palate is supple and rich, marked by flavors of plum, dark chocolate and spice cake. All those elements linger harmoniously on the long, velvety finish.



93

2018 THE STEADING BLANC

RATING: 93
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: Roussanne, Marsanne, Viognier

Torbreck's 2018 The Steading Blanc is an estate-grown blend of 50% Roussanne, 30% Marsanne and 20% Viognier. The Roussanne is made and aged in stainless steel, the Marsanne goes into old oak and the Viognier goes into new oak (to tone down the aromatics and phenolics). The result is slightly floral on the nose but rich and creamy on the palate. It's full-bodied, offering up flavors of pear, melon and apricot, and backed by a silky, plush texture and terrific length.

2018 WOODCUTTER'S RMV

RATING: 90
FROM: Barossa Valley, South Australia
VARIETY: Roussanne, Marsanne, Viognier

A blend of 51% Roussanne, 35% Marsanne and 13% Viognier (because of rounding, there's a percent gone missing), the 2018 Woodcutters Roussanne Marsanne Viognier is produced from growers' fruit. A hint of toasted marshmallow appears on the nose, along with white pepper and floral notes. On the palate, it's medium to full-bodied, slightly oily in texture and spicy, with a juicy, mouthwatering finish. It's a solid value in a versatile, ready-to-drink white wine.

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