

# AUSTRALIA: A FORCE FOR CHANGE IN WINE

**PERHAPS FORGOTTEN IN THE US FOR A FEW YEARS, AUSSIE WINEMAKERS ARE NOW AHEAD OF THE CURVE.**

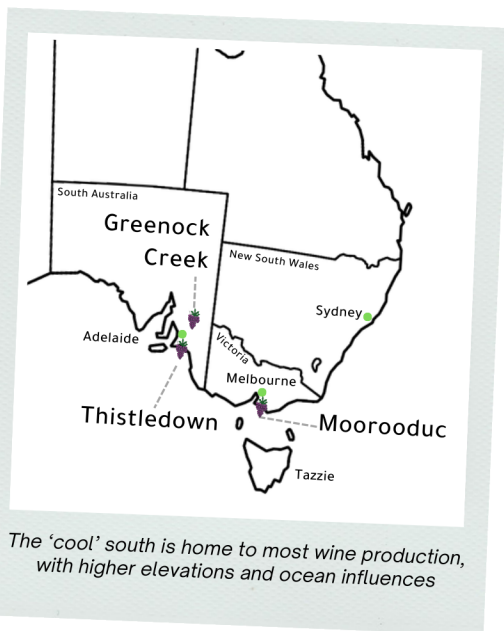
After highlighting wine from north of the equator in 2023, we'll flip the map and set sail across the southern seas from Australia to South Africa.

In the 'sea' of wine found in the US, Aussies will have some catching up to do against European countries, eager to reclaim the glass of American wine lovers from decades of competition from Southern Hemisphere wine countries.

But Australia's wine history is fascinating with many twists and turns, and the takeaway is this: Australia responds well to challenges and their new focus on quality and individuality is amazing.

A young generation of independent, skilled winemakers is hard at work crafting nuanced and delicious wines in tiny quantities, if you know where to look. We began with an open mind and happily found some real beauties !

Wine, good wine, spans the length of the 3000 mile wide continent, and is made mostly near the cool coasts from Western Australia to the Hunter Valley in the east. The February club features a relatively small part of the industry, centered around Adelaide in South Australia and Mornington Peninsula near Melbourne in Victoria. Due to their extremely remote location and large export economy, Aussies are acutely aware of global trends in wine, and are quick to respond to change. I'm excited to share what this country of strong, creative, and fun winemakers is up to these days. Cheers, Mate!



Follow along with tasting videos to get a closer look at the wines before opening them up! [winesintandem.com/videos](https://winesintandem.com/videos)



# THISTLEDOWN THORNY DEVIL GRENACHE



Founder and winemaker Giles Cooke in the vines

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**I FAIL TO THINK ABOUT WINE WITHOUT THINKING WHAT I’D LIKE TO EAT WITH IT.**  
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What makes Thistledown so interesting is similar to what makes Bodegas Frontonio in Spain (wine club, Sept 2023) a standout: a wine company focused on Grenache, a heat and drought tolerant grape with old vines planted in some of the best regions on earth. And as trends and tastes change, Grenache has been waiting decades to shine.

**Winery** Thistledown is among the new breed of wineries that place extreme value in something old, while making big bets on the future. Headed by Masters of Wine and awesome UK based wine importers Giles Cooke and Fergal Tynan, Thistledown began in 2010 and their first vintage was 2011. The same year as Bodegas Frontonio, also run by an MW. Their love of Grenache took them to McLaren Vale outside Adelaide in South Australia and their hard work is paying off with praise from wine writers and critics and a growing list of international customers. They have earned certified sustainable status and continue to impress with their gorgeous label art.

**Region** Thistledown’s mission is about expressing the region and the purity of the old bush vines that grow here, many dating back to the 1950s, and some from the late 1800s. McLaren Vale is tucked 30km south of Adelaide in South Australia, and is regarded for its complex and ancient vineyard soils, some of the most diverse and oldest in the world. McLaren Vale is located closer to the coast than other regarded neighbors like Barossa Valley, and Thistledown’s wines are in stark contrast to the massive, jammy wines that made this region famous. Once an underdog, old vine Grenache grapes now cost more than Shiraz and Cabernet for price per ton of fruit!

**Wine** The 2021 Thorny Devil is a blend of some of the best vineyards in the McLaren Vale, a bright introduction to their lineup of single vineyard wines. The sites are from sandier soils strewn with minerals in their bush trained vine and ‘dry grown’ or non irrigated. Picking earlier to preserve the fresh fruit and not blending other varieties, this pure wine smiles with a ruby hue, perfume and red berry aroma, elegant texture, with underlying Mediterranean spices. As they say in Oz, this wine is ‘smashable!’

**Pairing** - Not all wine pairings in Australia need to include meat, but it can help. Try this with an orange, cranberry and balsamic glazed chicken, saffron rice, and use the same glaze on a whole cauliflower for the non-meat eaters.

**Retail price \$28 | Member price \$23.8** Supplies of the 2021 extremely limited.

# MOOROODUC

# ESTATE PINOT NOIR



*The McIntyres in the winery at Moorooduc*

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**WE STRIVE, WITH CONTINUING DEDICATION AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL, TO BRING THE FRUIT OF THE VINE TO THE GLASS, IN THE MOST HONEST AND DELICIOUS REFLECTION OF PLACE AND VARIETIES GROWN.**  
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Most people don't think "PINOT!" when they hear Australia wine, but some of the best wines in the cool south are gorgeous Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays. I am always eager to showcase wines that are lesser known, so a wine from Mornington Peninsula was a must for the club for their Burgundy-like finesse and signature Australian style.

**Winery** Established in 1982 by Richard and Jill McIntyre, Moorooduc Estate is a small, family run winery and restaurant with a reputation for complex, elegant and food friendly wines and locally sourced, organic food. They believe that great wines start with intensive, hands-on care in the vineyard, with minimal use of chemicals, then wild yeast ferments and minimal intervention winemaking. A nod to traditional Burgundian techniques include French oak barrel aging. Today the wines are made by daughter Kate McIntyre, also an MW (another one!?), in their very unique rammed earth winery.

**Region** Mornington Peninsula lies south of metropolitan of Melbourne along the eastern side of Port Phillip Bay. Cooling effects of the windy Bass Strait and Antarctic currents make this small region at the bottom of the continent the perfect territory for finely crafted Pinot Noir. Originally lauded for its beaches, natural beauty, and country estates, Mornington is a place that reminds Pinot lovers of Sta Rita Hills in Santa Barbara County or the Willamette Valley in Oregon. Moorooduc, located slightly north in the region, expresses itself with sandier clay soils that translate to lifted fruit aromas and more flesh and weight to the wines, while still maintaining fresh acidity.

**Wine** I was skeptical about including a 6 year old wine in the club, but the decision was immediate when I poured the wine. It was perfect from the first drop to the last. The 2018 Estate Pinot is hand picked, gently processed, and spends 10 months in 20% new French oak, then bottled unfinned and unfiltered. The color of deep garnet is just starting to fade to brick. Aromas are a melange of dark berry fruit, leafy incense and potpourri. The palate is balanced between raspberry acidity, autumn spices, and pomegranate seed-like tannins. A sub \$40 'Burgundy' that simply rocks? Oh yeah!

**Pairing** It would be unfair to suggest anything but duck - a Pinot with duc in the name - I challenge you to order (or make) a Peking Duck. The delicacy of the rich and tender duck meat and crispy skin is a sublime pairing for this perfectly aged Pinot.

**Retail price \$39 | Member price \$33.15.** Supplies of the 2018 extremely limited.

# GREENOCK CREEK

# BAROSSA SHIRAZ



*Winemaking team Peter Atyeo and Alex Peel*

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**OUR NAME  
'GREENOCK CREEK  
VINEYARD & CELLARS'  
NEATLY CAPTURES OUR  
WINEMAKING MASTERPLAN,  
WHICH STEADFASTLY  
ADHERES TO THE IDEA OF  
'VINEYARD FIRST, WINERY  
SECOND'**  
"

Only sometimes does a world class winery ALSO make an affordable option. It all comes down to supply and demand, and the prices of the best wines keep going up while simultaneously getting harder to find. An entry level wine, if there ever was one, is no longer made, and the wines are no longer available for the general wine public.

**Winery** That is the not case with Greenock Creek in Barossa Valley. They have achieved an astonishing eight 100 point scores from the leading critic (granted, not this \$32 wine) for their exceptional single vineyard Shiraz and Cabernet. And still after all these years, they continue to make a wine for the people (my words, not theirs). Originally started in 1984, the winery's reputation grew quickly and was considered a modern pioneer of quality wines in the Barossa from day one. The founders retired in 2018, but the facets, people, and winemaking remain the same.

**Region** Barossa Valley lies northeast of Adelaide in South Australia and is still a place where big, burly Aussie reds reign supreme. The bigger, the better. With neighbors like Torbreck and Two Hands, the focus here is on power. Barossa got this way when it's warm climate, different even than neighbors on the south side of Adelaide, showcased extraordinary wines in the Seppeltsfield parish in the late 1880s. Back then, the wines were very sweet, but they were good! Today's wines are bold, higher in alcohol, and still maybe have a dash of sweetness. Soil types vary across the region, and single vineyard bottlings, a focus of Greenock Creek, are now common.

**Wine** The standard *Barossa Shiraz* is a blend of their vineyard expressions across different parishes. I'm lifting these tastings notes directly because they are so well stated: "Plush, rich, silky Marananga with its underlying power; the earthy, gamey leanings of Seppeltsfield and its rustic, gravelly tannins that wrap around the lush fruit; and the aromatic flowers, fruit and sweet spices that float above the flinty bass notes of Moppa." Picked and fermented in small lots, basket pressed, and aged in a combination of 10% new and 90% 'seasoned' barrels for 20 months. Pinch me!

**Pairing** - Choices abound with a delicious Shiraz, so try something fun and different like Yotam Ottolenghi's lamb and beef meatballs with broad beans and couscous. Sprinkle with salty feta to bring it together, then let us know when you need more!

**Retail price \$32 | Member price \$27.2**