



Australian Wines

In just 200 years, Australia's wine industry has grown from a few small plantings to an industry renowned throughout the world for quality, innovation and depth. In fact, Australia is consistently one of the top ten wine producing countries in the world and is one of the few countries that produces every one of the major wine styles.

After dazzling export growth in the 1990s and early 2000s, especially in the good-value, large-volume sector of the market, Australian growers are under increasing pressure from limited water supplies (it's irrigation that has enabled them to produce such large and consistent crops in hot inland regions) and the industry is at pains to show the world that it can also excel in regionally specific mid-range and fine wines using a broader palette of grape varieties. Plantings of **Pinot Gris/Grigio**, **Viognier** and **Sauvignon Blanc** have all grown as these grapes find increasing favour nationally and internationally, while Italian and Iberian varieties (principally Sangiovese, Nebbiolo and Tempranillo) are proving successful on a much smaller scale. The wine industry is not fundamentally distinguished by history (Australia was one of the vine's later conquests), and certainly not by geography (Australian wine producers are congenial truckers of grapes and blenders of wines), but by its philosophy. 'Can do', perhaps best sums up the Australian attitude to wine production.

The wine regions of Australia constitute different departments in one huge wine factory, any one of which may be called upon to deliver a spare part as and when required.

Part of the explanation for this lies in the division between winemaking and grape growing as commercial activities. Typical Australian wine producers buy in most of their grapes and, thanks to the refrigerated transport systems needed in a country as big and as hot as this, may well buy them from several hundred, or even thousand, miles away.





Today, the main wine producing regions of Australia remain in the cooler south east of the country. There are about 60 wine-producing regions throughout Australia. Vineyards in South Australia (e.g. Barossa Valley, Clare Valley, Coonawarra), Victoria (e.g. Swan Hill, Yarra Valley, Rutherglen) and New South Wales (e.g. Hunter Valley, Mudgee, Riverina) produce most of Australia's wine, with Tasmania, Queensland (e.g. South Burnett, Stanthorpe) and southwest Western Australia (e.g. Margaret River, Swan District) also contributing well recognised products. But it is not unusual to find a working, productive vineyard almost anywhere in Australia.

As wine has become more popular in Australian society, it has become a part of the culture. The rise in popularity of wine appreciation courses, wine bars and boutique wineries has shown that Australians are serious about their wine. Where we once used to head off to the beach for the weekend, many Australians are now heading off on tours of regional wineries for tastings and winemaking demonstrations.

To help you get started on distinguishing them, here's our introduction to Australia's most famous wines:



CLARENDON HILLS

Clarendon Hills is owned and run by Ukrainian immigrant **Roman Bratasiuk**, who arrived in Australia with his parents in **1950**. The winery is situated 25 miles south of Adelaide, and is surrounded by vineyards, all within two miles of the estate. The Clarendon Hills vineyards include Brookman, Hickinbotham, Sandown, Blewitt Springs, Clarendon, Liandra, Piggott Range, Romas, Astralis and Kangarilla. All the vines are dry grown, hand harvested, and mostly untrellised "Bush Vines"; soil types vary dramatically despite proximity of the vineyard plots. Sand and clay top soils and ironstone, sandstone, even gravel lies beneath.

Bratasiuk's winery produces only 800 to 1000 cases. There are now nineteen single vineyard wines and they are 100% varietal, planted with the oldest vines of Grenache, Shiraz, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon aged between 70 to 100 years and the average age of 60 years.

Clarendon Hills is known for rich and inky Shiraz but they also make great Cabernet and Grenache. Their 2006 Grenache is said to be the best expression of Grenache from Australia. Unlike many Aussie wineries, the wines at Clarendon Hills are held back, so they have a chance to properly age. Their current release is 2010, whereas most other Aussie wineries are releasing their 2011s or 2012s. Their **high end wine, Astralis**, recently received a perfect **100 points** from Robert Parker. Indeed, these guys are that good. These wines also age exceptionally well, just like the older vintages of both Shiraz and Grenache that are 10 years old.





TWO HANDS WINES

Two Hands Wines was founded in early 1999 with the aim to make the the best possible Shiraz-based wines from prized growing regions throughout Australia. Headed up by Founder and Managing Director, Michael Twelftree, Two Hands' intention was, and still is, to showcase the diversity of Australian Shiraz by highlighting regional characteristics and allowing the fruit to be the primary feature of the wines. Michael personally guides the wines through the viticulture and winemaking process and refers to the very intimate approach taken with each small parcel of graspes.



Two Hands set out to be unique. This approach is reflected in everything from the names of the wines through to innovative packaging and, not least, the wines themselves. Talking about some of their amazing wines in Barrosasa, Lily's Garden and Bella's Garden are undeniable top-the-notch.

Two Hands has grown to be a clear market leader and is now sold in over 38 countries around the world. From small beginnings, the winery has been able to manage its growth organically while maintaining its quality core value and they are now turning their attention to further developing their estate vineyards in the Barossa Valley.

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