

MITOLO

Reiver Barossa Shiraz 2004

Canberra Times SHIRAZ IN A YOUNGER GUISE

We Aussies love a big, big Aussie Shiraz. Its style is changing, though, and it's changing for the better. The old-style big shiraz was big on oak and big on tannin. You could easily imagine chewing through a piece of prune-flavoured wood, filled with grape skin and sweet juice, and compare it with a big Aussie red. Over many years in the bottle these wines usually

matured into delicious old reds. The vindication for making a sometimes over-the-top, almost undrinkable style in its youth was the extraordinary cellaring potential these wines possessed.

Modern wine drinkers have a much shorter attention span. We want a wine to drink now and cellar if we feel like it. Blame it on the impetuosity of youth but most young drinkers don't have cellars. We love to drink big rich complex shiraz without the need for fussing about with cellaring wines. With good winemaking practise the magical combination can be achieved – young wines that drink well but have the ability to improve over time. A good wine should always be in balance young or old.

At the forefront of this style evolution are the shirazes made by Ben Riggs and Ben Glaetzer. Young, innovative and with real understanding of wine textures, the two Bens and their classmates are redefining Australian shiraz.

The *Mitolo Reiver reviewed this week is a stunning example of the modern Australian shiraz*. Made by Glaetzer, it is a great example of sumptuous, deep, red-berry fruit over gentle persistent tannins, *made for drinking now but with plenty of pedigree to last at least another 10 years*. It's all about fruit ripeness, the textures of the grape skins and the tricks used in the winery.

Don't worry about the tricks, though. Just enjoy the wines, because our parents would have needed to wait many years longer to appreciate the same wines.

Reiver is a raider from across the border, or in this case, a Barossa impostor in an otherwise McLaren Vale stable. *The Reiver is sumptuous and rich with unmistakably velvety Barossa tannins and intense deep plummy fruit flavours. "Reiver" is deceptively close to French verb "to dream" and for many years this is the epitome of a dream shiraz. Absolutely delicious.*

Fergus McGhie
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