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JULY 31, 2017
\$6.99 US



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NEW FACES OF AUSTRALIA

By MaryAnn Worobiec

AGAPANTHUS

Winemaking couple Alyson and Richard McDonald met while working harvest in Napa in 2009. Later, they moved to Australia, Richard's homeland, and founded Agapanthus in 2013, using grapes from some of Barossa's oldest vineyards. "Our winemaking is a modern style of Barossa Shiraz," explains Alyson. "We allow the true spirit and flavor of the fruit to come through. We have minimal intervention." They named their label after the Agapanthus flower, which was in full bloom during their wedding.

- 90 **Agapanthus Shiraz Barossa Valley 2014** \$70
90 **Agapanthus Shiraz Barossa Valley 2013** \$70

ALPHA CRUCIS/WITS END

Labeled as Chalk Hill in Australia, these wines are bottled under Alpha Crucis and Wits End for sale in the U.S. to avoid confusion with the California brand Chalk Hill. This McLaren Vale winery was founded in 1964 by John and Di Harvey, and is now run by their son Tom, with Renae Hirsch as winemaker. The wines embrace everything modern about Australian winemaking: a focus on Mediterranean varieties like Vermentino and Fiano, and a style that highlights natural acidity, lower alcohol levels and perfumy notes. Winemaking choices include minimizing new oak and fermenting some parcels whole bunch and with natural yeasts.

- 92 **Alpha Crucis Shiraz McLaren Vale Titan 2015** \$26
89 **Wits End Shiraz McLaren Vale Luna 2015** \$18
88 **Wits End Vermentino McLaren Vale Lopresti Block 10 Vineyard 2016** \$16



Richard Betts and Carla Rzeszewski of Barossa's An Approach to Relaxation



Richard and Alyson McDonald of Agapanthus in Barossa

AN APPROACH TO RELAXATION

Master Sommelier Richard Betts is the former director of Aspen's the Little Nell restaurant, founder of wine label Betts & Scholl in Australia and co-founder of Italian brand Scarpetta and California's CC: Wines. He's also the author of *The Essential Scratch and Sniff Guide to Becoming a Wine Expert*. His latest wine venture takes him back to Australia, where he and his wife, Carla Rzeszewski, a former New York restaurant wine director, are exploring their fandom of old-vine Grenache, here grown in sandy soils from the Vine Vale region of the Barossa. The wines are fragrant and elegant, with distinctive pepper and fresh earth notes.

- 92 **An Approach To Relaxation Grenache Barossa Valley Sucette 2014** \$59
90 **An Approach To Relaxation Grenache Barossa Valley Sucette 2015** \$59

50S/ESS&SEE

Winemaker Steve Grimley felt he was getting lost making wines for large-production brands, so, in 2006, he founded the 50S Project (Five O'Clock Somewhere), a collection of small-batch wines made in the spirit of collaboration between a rotating group of winemakers and artists who create unique wine labels. Most of the wines made at his "micro-winery" in South Australia's McLaren Vale are produced in 1- and 2-ton open-top fermentors and showcase a side of Australian wine not typically seen, including bottlings of Malbec and Montepulciano.

Ess&See is Grimley's personal project, originally called "Stamford and Clark" after the last names, respectively, of his partner, Anna, and his mother. Grimley used the shorthand "S & C" to mark the barrels, and the name stuck.

- 92 **50S Project Shiraz-Viognier McLaren Vale Single Vineyard 2015** \$25