

CHARTER - BARONS OF THE BAROSSA / FIVE VIRTUES

By Paul Foster

Tried wine from a *tastevin*? One of those curious cups you sometimes see on a ribbon round the neck of a red-robed figure with a funny hat, who has seemingly stepped from a Tudor-times movie. Those shining shallow cups with patterns in the metal of their bumpy bowls that flash light through the wine to strike a sparkle.

If you haven't, don't worry. They're all but impossible to sniff from and honestly dreadful to drink from. And they make your wine so easy to spill. But they do look intriguing and they're an essential extra for the rich regalia worn by Barons of the world's various winegrowing brotherhoods when their lordships get together for food, wine and fun.

A *tastevin*, attached to a red green and gold ribbon, features on the light grey label of a wonderful '08 Shiraz wine that has recently been released by the Barons of Barossa brand. A wonderfully regional wine in every way, it's a blend of materials sourced from fourteen Valley winemakers all of whom are Barons in a brotherhood that can boast Stephen Henschke as Grand Master.

The Barons of Barossa Shiraz 08 does justice to such famous names as Gramp (Orlando), Hill-Smith (Yalumba), Lehmann, Seppelt and Glaetzer, each of which has been borne by Barons. Rich, complex and marvellously mellow for a thing of such youth, it is a joy to drink and, at its price, is quite remarkable value. Take a pallet, at least, right now.

Another red, that has lately come onto the scene, shares something of its philosophy. It's the Western Australia Five Virtues 2008 Shiraz and is conceived as a statement of Great Southern style, crafted of parcels from each of that district's sub-regions: Albany, Denmark, Mount Barker, Porungurup and Frankland River. John Durham, Chief Winemaker at Plantagenet oversaw the blending and the wine includes barrels from Alkoomi, Ferngrove, Montgomery, Zarapath and West Cape Howe.

Five Virtues *Great Southern Shiraz 2008*

Tightly-woven, with power and elegance. Cool-climate magic with blue and black - cherry and plum - spicy fruit flavours. A measure of charry oak. Framed by fine tannins. Should cellar medium-term.
\$27.99

Barons of Barossa *Barossa Shiraz 2008*

Cheese as to chalk. Generous, round, rich and deep with lots of layers of ripe fruit flavour. Bold but softly textured. Genuine length. Lovely chewy tannins. Should suit extended cellaring.
\$29.99