



Rare and Fine Three interpretations of winemaking precision

The breadth of Yalumba's winemaking resources is concentrated in a small band of premium reds, classified within the company simply as "Rare and Fine".

These wines – The Signature Cabernet Sauvignon & Shiraz (Barossa), The Octavius Shiraz (Old Vine Barossa), and The Menzies Cabernet Sauvignon (Coonawarra) – are individual interpretations of different winemaking principles.

The Signature is distinguished by the consistency of the Yalumba house style of Cabernet & Shiraz; The Octavius by an innovative use of oak; and The Menzies by the provenance of a single vineyard site in Coonawarra.

The 2000 vintages of The Signature, The Octavius and The Menzies have just been released.

2000 THE SIGNATURE

The 2000 vintage of The Signature – one of the longest standing wine traditions in Australia - is dedicated to Peter Lehmann.

Each vintage of The Signature (a blend of Barossa cabernet sauvignon and shiraz) since inception in 1962 has been dedicated to an individual recognised for their "contribution to the culture and tradition of Yalumba."

Lehmann started his career at Yalumba in 1947 at the age of 17, and stayed for 13 years, leaving an indelible mark on the Yalumba culture.

Yalumba proprietor, Robert Hill Smith, said Lehmann's legacy remained with the company for years after he left.

"We never worked together, but Peter Lehmann was always an inspiration. His honesty, creativity and generosity were building blocks in the growth of Yalumba in the 1960s," Hill Smith says.

"Peter is almost family, and this is the superannuation reward he claims he never received," he adds wryly.

The vintage to wear Lehmann's name is, a blend of 57% cabernet sauvignon and 43% shiraz.

"We strive for a consistency of style that can only be achieved with a blend," says senior winemaker Kevin Glastonbury. "Every Signature salutes the best of vintage, and the people who shaped Yalumba."

2000 THE OCTAVIUS

Yalumba is one of a select few wineries in the world to make barrels on site with its own cooperage, and The Octavius is a wine that could only be made with such a resource. This unique wine celebrates its 10th release with the 2000 vintage.

Kevin Glastonbury, custodian of The Octavius, says the latest vintage marks a coming of age for the wine that began as an experiment driven by the use of small oak barrels known as octaves (approximately 90L capacity) with the inaugural vintage in 1988.

“In the early years it was the barrels that characterised the wine more than the variety, vineyards or even the region,” Glastonbury says.

In recent vintages, Glastonbury has relaxed the oak regime, seeking greater balance and integration of fruit. “The Octavius will always be primarily matured in octaves, but it is inevitable that great fruit from vines dating back to the early 1900s will have the final say in the winery.” This evolution has seen Glastonbury sourcing a much finer quality American oak for the cooperage to work with and he has also reduced the amount of new oak used to around 60% and the maturation time to about 20 months.

“What we are about is simply making the best possible Barossa Old Vine Shiraz we can, given all our grower and oak resources,” Glastonbury says. “I’m now even using about 10% new French oak, which really opens up my blending options.”

The 2000 vintage of The Octavius has been aged for 18 months in 60% new American oak octaves and 10% in new French oak hogsheads. The balance of the wine has been matured in one year old French and American oak hogsheads.

2000 THE MENZIES

Since 1987, Yalumba has had an unequivocal goal to capture the best of a superb patch of Coonawarra *terra rossa* and bottle it as The Menzies. The release of the 2000 vintage has been held back 12 months, a move senior winemaker Peter Gambetta says benefits the style of the wine enormously.

“It is a cabernet of finesse and restraint; a style that ages beautifully,” Gambetta says. “We are now committed to releasing it four years after vintage, which allows it to reach some of its potential – with it showing primary fruit and some secondary bottle maturation character.”

The Menzies is drawn from 25 year old vines in the heart of Coonawarra. Yalumba purchased the vineyard in 1992.

“Coonawarra has always been very important to Yalumba. The Octavius started as a Coonawarra Cabernet, and some of the early Signatures had Coonawarra material in the blend. It was a natural progression that we would release a single vineyard Coonawarra Cabernet, and it is now a benchmark wine for the company.”

A philosophy of environmental sustainability exists at The Menzies Vineyard. The farming techniques practised are minimalist in terms of intervention and balance well with the naturally occurring low yields (4 to 5 tonne per hectare) of small clusters of fruit with strong colour and intense flavour.

Gambetta also explained that Yalumba’s investment in small capacity fermenters contributes to the complexity of The Menzies. “The Menzies draws from nine individual sub-plots, and we can maintain the integrity of those parcels with small ferments. Blending decisions can be made much later, and solely on wine quality, not the capacity of the tanks.”

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