

Wine Ratings: Some low-priced shirazes get high scores

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The Boxer, a shiraz wine from Mollydooker

Looking for a wine to go with your barbecue this weekend? Consider one of the Australian bottles in our new [Ratings of shiraz](#) (also known as syrah), the dark and rich red wine that pairs well with meats from the grill. Very good shirazes from Down Under cost as little as \$7, and one excellent bottle was only \$13.

Australian wines generally rose to the top of our [Ratings](#), available to subscribers. The top scorers were The Boxer from Mollydooker (the term is Aussie slang for a leftie, in case you're curious), \$22, and the \$13 shiraz from Greg Norman, the Australian golf star.

But ranked just below those wines were a quartet of bargain shirazes, all Australian, all very good overall, and all about \$7 per 750-milliliter bottle. The Thorn Clark Terra Barossa was \$9 for a 1-liter bottle, which works out to \$6.75 for 750ml. Three others, all widely distributed, cost just \$7: Alice White, The Little Penguin, and Yellow Tail. The lone U.S. bottle to receive a very good score was Francis Coppola's syrah-shiraz, \$15.

Our test selections in wine lean toward moderately priced bottles that are widely available and have already fared well with other reviewers, such as specialty wine publications. But we do sometimes include pricier bottles. The most expensive bottles we included this time did not fare especially well, further underlining that a high price doesn't necessarily assure high quality in a wine.




Our two wine experts, who evaluate the wines blind (that is, without knowing the brand or other information) and in repeated samples from different bottles, deemed the \$43 Andretti Napa Valley to be well made and good with food. Yet they also judged it fairly simple and with a shorter finish and less intense wood flavors than most. The Andretti scored only good overall, as did the Casa Dumetz Syrah, \$35; JC Cellars 2008, \$26; and the Blenheim Vineyards, \$20, which hails from Virginia and exemplifies the spread of winemaking to more states and regions. (The Aussie bottles aside, the other wines mentioned above are all from California.)

Our Ratings provide details on the styles and other flavor attributes of the shirazes, and even offer our experts' recommendations of specific foods to serve with each. Most shirazes pair well with full-flavored, hearty foods, including beef, lamb, pork, game, rich fish such as tuna and salmon, roasted vegetables, and, yes, smoky barbecue.

—Paul Reynolds

Shiraz Ratings

Brand & Model		Price	Ratings and Test Results			
		Approximate retail price	Overall score 	Varietal 	Style 	Origin
			0			
			P F G W E			
			100			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mollydooker The Boxer 2009	\$24	84	Shiraz	Fruity/Woody	Australia
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greg Norman Estates 2007	\$13	82	Shiraz	Fruity/Woody	Australia
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thorn Clarke Terra Barossa 2009	\$14	78	Shiraz	Fruity/Woody	Australia
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alice White 2009	\$6	74	Shiraz	Fruity/Woody	Australia
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Little Penguin 2009	\$7	72	Shiraz	Fruity/Woody	Australia
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yellow Tail 2009	\$7	67	Shiraz	Fruity/Woody	Australia
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Francis Coppola 2008	\$15	61	Syrah-Shiraz	Fruity	CA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Penfolds Koonunga Hill 2009	\$11	58	Shiraz	Fruity/Woody	Australia
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Layer Cake 2009	\$16	56	Shiraz	Fruity/Woody	Australia
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Andretti Napa Valley 2008	\$43	55	Syrah	Fruity/Woody	CA

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Casa Dumetz 2009 	\$35	52	Syrah Noir	Fruity/Woody	CA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Blenheim 2009 	\$20	50	Syrah	Fruity/Woody	VA
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	JC Cellars 2008 	\$26	50	Syrah	Fruity	CA