

Tasting Notes from the James Halliday Australian Wine Companion 2019

Beechworth Wine Estates

4.5 Star Winery Rating – James Halliday, Australian Wine Companion 2019

Chardonnay 2015

Beguiling chardonnay. Powerful, creamy, floral and long. As soon as you put it near your nose you know you're in for a treat. This is wonderful stuff. Grapefruit, white flowers, fistfuls of spice, smoky bacon, almonds, yellow stone fruits, the full ensemble. Nose, palate, finish; all are top notch. **Rating 96 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Pinot Gris 2017

Fermented in old oak and kept on lees for 6 months. Subdued nose but a rich, almost stately, palate, with honeysuckle, cedar wood and juicy pear to the fore, spice and wood smoke notes then leading the race to finish. Leaves an impression of 'controlled power'. **Rating 92 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Merlot Reserve 2014

You can see why it was decided to accord this wine Reserve status: it has effortless communication of cassis, mulberry and plum within a fine gauze of tannins, cut by notes of briar, oak a bystander. **Rating 92 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Tannat 2015

Eucalypt characters are part and parcel of the Australian landscape but this wine shows them all too keenly on both the nose and the palate. It's hard to see the fruit for the tree leaves. There's mid-weight berried fruit behind but it's starved of opportunity. **Rating 85 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Cofield

4 Star Winery Rating – James Halliday, Australian Wine Companion 2019

Sparkling Pinot Noir Chardonnay 2014

A full straw hue announces a more than three-quarters pinot noir lead. The tension of the King and Alpine Valleys contrasts the palate breadth of pinot, finishing spicy, savoury and lacking fruit lift and definition. one bottle tasted was oxidised. **Rating 86 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Sparkling Shiraz 2015

Both sweet and complex. Relatively light in colour but the palate parades licorice straps, plum, toffee apple and leather characters, ripples of coffee and spice appearing late. Flows well in general though there's a slight dry grippiness to the finish. **Rating 89 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Riesling 2017

It has a grape skin softness and a good lick of citrus-driven flavour, both of which riesling drinkers will enjoy. Talc-like characters won't hurt either. Nothing fancy but pure and honest. **Rating 89 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Pinot Grigio 2017

As much gris as grigio with fleshy pear and rose water characters and a gentle cuddliness to the texture. There's almost a milky lactose note here. Doesn't lack flavour. **Rating 87 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Sauvignon Blanc 2017

As generous as it is balanced. Tropical fruit, whispers of dry grass, citrus and musk. No false moves. **Rating 88 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Due South

Merlot 2013

Berried fruit flavours with strings of herbs. The odd rough edge. **Rating 85 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Gallagher Wines

4.5 Star Winery Rating – James Halliday, Australian Wine Companion 2019

Sparkling Duet Pinot Noir Chardonnay NV

A non-vintage blend of 51% pinot noir/49% chardonnay and while the age of those parcels is unknown, the wine spends 18 months on lees. The mid-gold hue is advanced and the palate is drying out although there's some strawberry compote, citrus and buttered toast. **Rating 85 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Sparkling Blanc de Blanc 2012

Refreshing, lively melon and lemon flavours to the fore, some complexity coming through via toasted brioche and clotted cream. Ultimately a dry-ish style with a clean finish. **Rating 91 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Shiraz 2016

Crushed, 9 days on skins and pressed to new and 1yo French and American oak barrels for 16 months. Attractive mid-purple garnet hue; a sprinkling of black pepper and spice mixed with the dark fruits. And with supple tannins, its a medium-bodied and stylish wine, just the charry oak and dry finish are holding it back. **Rating 92 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Gipsie Jack

4 Star Winery Rating – James Halliday, Australian Wine Companion 2019

Pinot Gris 2017

An upfront gris without the pucker of many. This will appeal to those who like a smooth slushy of apple and pear gelati to whet the palate, without any bite. **Rating 88 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Sauvignon Blanc 2017

Sherbet, passionfruit and grapefruit pulp, finishing abrupt with a dash of talc.

Rating 86 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019

Cabernet Sauvignon 2016

This is price-fighting cabernet with dukes raised! We must not forget that despite its warmth, the Fleurieu holds a maritime influence to bestow its Bordeaux varieties with a regional DNA-stoked herbal freshness, complementing their inherent richness. The result can be delicious. Here is an example, purportedly from old vines, many aged between 50 and 60 years.

Rating 93 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019

Dolcetto 2016

Meaning 'sweet little one' in Italian, physiologically dolcetto boasts an array of pulpy purple fruit allusions, moderate acidity and firm tannins. This is no exception, with the extraction a point, making for a gluggable, eminently enjoyable wine that holds plenty of food-pairing cards up its sleeve. Needs time for the oak tannins to integrate.

Rating 91 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019

Dolcetto Rose 2017

Endeavours to harness the herbal edged refreshment factor of contemporary rose styles, with some candied red fruits and grapey torrefacted aromas. Plenty of flavour and crunch, finishing with some fruit sweetness.

Rating 88 Bronze James Halliday Wine

Malbec 2016

Prime turf for malbec, Langhorne Creek is producing some beauties and this is no exception. Violet aromas segue to a juicy, fulsome palate of abundant blue and dark fruit allusions given tension and further complexity by a hint of reductive smokiness. Malbec's corpulence absorbs the oak and pH handling better, perhaps, than the other 'alternative' varieties in the range.

Rating 93 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019

Lagrein 2016

Langhorne Creek is a hotbed of experimentation with newer grape varieties to these shores, particularly Italian cultivars such as this. Delicious scents of blueberry, dried herb and red and black plum leap from the glass. The palate is firm and dutifully extracted, imparting a sinuous weave of tannin to complement gentle oak and a spurt of obtuse acidity.

Rating 92 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019

Happs

5 Red Star Winery Rating – James Halliday, Australian Wine Companion 2019

Indigenous Series Margaret River Semillon 2014

Another major surprise for this label: a semillon that could equally well be a sauvignon blanc or a chardonnay, the only question turning on the amount (if any) of residual sugar. A significant part of the reason is Erl Happ's comment (in the context of the versatility of semillon) that this was picked with gold rather than green berries (in the Hunter Valley semillon is picked with green berries, as is chardonnay in the Yarra Valley). **Rating 90 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Pinot Noir 2017

This wine from Happs' Three Hills Vineyard in the south of Margaret River has varietal character, its issue a lack of depth of fruit. A bold try. **Rating 90 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Cabernet Merlot 2015

This is a Bordeaux-inspired melody of 66% cabernet sauvignon, 20% merlot, 9% cabernet franc; the remainder petit verdot. A bright crimson, this is a fleshy wine of currant, black cherry and bay leaf flavours. The tannins are nicely massaged to a velour that is both palpable and tactile enough for poise and savour, yet smooth enough to facilitate delicious early to mid-term drinking. This said, you shouldn't worry if you forget a few bottles in your cellar. **Rating 92 James Halliday Wine Companion 2018**

Hirsch Hill Estate

4 Star Winery Rating – James Halliday, Australian Wine Companion 2019

Chardonnay 2015

From a single vineyard block, whole-bunch pressed, 50% free-run juice, fermented in French oak (30% new), matured on lees for 9 months. A standout bargain Yarra Valley chardonnay. It's supremely elegant, perfectly balanced and unhesitatingly asserts its sense of place. The flowery, aromatic bouquet, very long palate and its freshness and purity of grapefruit acidity are faultless. **Rating 95 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Cabernet Sauvignon Blanc 2015

Hand-picked, crushed and destemmed, open-fermented, pumped over twice daily, matured in French hogsheads (30% new) for 18 months. Bright crimson-purple; classic cool grown cabernet at a bargain basement price - almost defies imagination. Blackcurrant, black olive tapenade and dried herbs are the dominant players along with dour cabernet tannins. Needs, and will repay, patience. **Rating 90 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Shiraz 2015

Estate-grown. The aromas and flavours are from left field, and not easy to do a forensic examination. Both the palate and bouquet have a savoury character with notes of earth, black olive, dark plum fruits and high-toned spices. Rolled into one stream, they are very attractive. I'm intrigued. **Rating 93 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Stockman's Ridge

4 Star Winery Rating – James Halliday, Australian Wine Companion 2019

Sauvignon Blanc 2016

Smoke and nettle notes marshal forces before the cavalry of tropical fruit arrives. It has texture and power, both aided by a smidgen of fruit sweetness, though it finishes dry and with no shortage of finesse. Tasty. **Rating 90 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Pinot Gris 2016 Straw-coloured with the slightest tinge of pink. There's plenty of fruit here and a good crackle of spice too, the show continuing faithfully through to a warmish but satisfying finish. Keep it nicely chilled. **Rating 90 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Merlot 2014

The flavour profile is generally attractive but it lacks depth, and ultimately finishes (slightly) bitter. **Rating 85 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Pinot Noir 2014

Stems and herbs meet reductive smoke notes and then (light) cherried fruit. A stringy wine. Tangy. **Rating 87 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Shiraz 2015

A light but refreshing red with tangy red cherry, peppercorn and sweet spice notes rippling through the palate. It feels as though it's just keeping its head above water but it manages to do so successfully. **Rating 87 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Three Hills

5 Red Star Winery Rating – James Halliday, Australian Wine Companion 2019

Charles Andreas Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Petit Verdot 2015

A quintessential Bordeaux blend, spanning across 50% cabernet, 17% merlot, 17% malbec and 16% petit verdot, this is a tightly-knit, powerful expression defined by a thrust of fine-grained mint-chocolate-coffee grind-tannins and a streak of uplifting mint, bell pepper and lilac florals lofting over a coterie of plum, black currant, pastille, sage and bay leaf. There is serious gravitas about this and it will age exceptionally well. **Rating 94 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Waterton Hall

4.5 Star Winery Rating – James Halliday, Australian Wine Companion 2019

2016 Waterton Hall Riesling

An extra year in bottle has smoothed out the palate, with the appearance of more depth and consistency to the lime-accented fruit.

Rating 89 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019

2016 Waterton Hall Shiraz

Estate-grown vines planted '99 and '13, hand-picked, wild-fermented, matured in French oak for 12 months. Very interesting wine: it's fragrant and juicy, yet also intense and very long on the palate, with no hint of green/vegetal notes. It looks as if it has waltzed its way to its alcohol, and is happy in its own skin. Impressive, and demands you to crack the screwcap here and now. **Rating 95 James Halliday Wine Companion 2019**

Yilgarnia

2014 Semillon For delivery of texture and flavour it's hard to fault this. Tinned tropical fruits come infused with lemongrass. It continues the parade all the way along the palate. **Rating 91 James Halliday Wine Companion 2017**