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First Drop Wines



PO Box 64, Williamstown, SA 5351 **Region** Barossa Valley SA
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Winemaker Matt Gant **Established** 2005 **Dozens** 5000

This is a virtual winery, with no vineyards and no winery of its own. What it does have is two owners with immaculate credentials to produce a diverse range of wines of significantly higher quality than those of many more conventional operations. Matt Gant was in his final year of a geography degree at the University of London in 1995 when lecturer Tim Unwin (a noted wine writer) contrived a course that involved tastings and ultimately a field trip of Burgundy and Champagne. Geography went out the window, and Matt did vintages in NZ, Spain, Italy, Portugal, the US and finally Australia. Working at St Hallett he won the Wine Society's Young Winemaker of the Year Award '04, and the Young Gun Wine Award for First Drop in '07. John Retsas has an equally impressive CV, working at St Hallett and Chain of Ponds, and is now general manager of Schild Estate. First Drop's portfolio includes Arneis, Nebbiolo, Barbera and Montepulciano (all from the Adelaide Hills), Barossa Trincadeira Rose, a string of Barossa Shirazs ranging from \$25 to \$100 a bottle, and Cabernet Sauvignon and Touriga Nacional from McLaren Vale. Exports to the UK, the US, Canada, Denmark, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and NZ.



Fat of the Land Single Vineyard Greenock Barossa Valley Shiraz 2008

Dark, deep purple; here the oak choice is new French hogsheads for 24 months; needless to say, full-bodied, but there is a focus and definition to the multiplicity of the aromas and flavours that lightens the burden; the palate is supple and finishes with a flourish of spicy black fruits. **Rating 96**

Fat of the Land Ebenezer Single Vineyard Barossa Valley Shiraz 2008

Deep red-purple; spent 24 months in 100% new French hogsheads on fine lees; the bouquet is very expressive with savoury blackberry aromas intertwined with the oak, the intense, full-bodied palate providing more of the same. The cellaring recommendation of 5-8 years must have been the result of cork closures, in each case of high quality and perfectly inserted. **Rating 95**

The Cream Barossa Valley Shiraz 2008

An even more minimalist front label; a blend of the three vineyards ex barrel, 60% new French, 20% new American, 20% not specified. Deep colour, of course; this is the most powerful of this quartet, with intense, savoury black fruits, and nowhere near ready to drink; the balance of all these wines, massive though they undoubtedly are, encourages cellaring except for the piece of tree bark. **Rating 95**

Fat of the Land Seppeltsfield Single Vineyard Barossa Valley Shiraz 2008

Bright, deep purple-red; a major change in tune partly due to 24 months in 100% new American oak hogsheads; here dark chocolate notes swirl through the black cherry and plum fruit, the tannins ripe and round. The front labels of these three wines are virtually identical, and resolutely minimalist. **Rating 94**



Mother's Milk Barossa Shiraz 2009

Strong, positive colour; a rich and complex bouquet and palate for a wine with an array of blackberry, earth, spice and licorice (plus oak) aromas and flavours, and an unexpectedly elegant flourish on the finish. The cartoon label undersells the wine given its price. **Rating 93**

Two Percent Barossa Shiraz 2008

Back to delphic baroque labelling ; bright purple-crimson; while the wine is still full-bodied, in comparative terms it seems lighter, with some red fruits sneaking in amongst the black forest; the mouthfeel, too, is rounder. **Rating 93**

Bella Coppia Adelaide Hills Arneis 2010

Light straw-green; grown in the appropriate climate, as it is here, arneis does have distinctive varietal character, welding together citrus and nashi pear, with a zesty, almost savoury, finish. **Rating 91**

Mother's Ruin McLaren Vale Cabernet Sauvignon 2009

Crimson-purple; rich, warm and inviting (in sharp contrast to the front label) with lush and juicy cassis, plum and blackcurrant fruit. **Rating 91**