

# TasteTeam

## The Subtleties of a Sultry Shiraz

Shiraz, or often named Syrah, is one and the same varietal, but the Syrah version is often considered to be more 'feminine', grown in cooler climates. Shiraz brings the spice to life with peppery notes. South African Shiraz is generally full-bodied and has ripe red fruits that come to the fore. The more elegant versions have hints of plums and berries and one can even expect violets or liquorice if you're lucky. Perfect to be enjoyed with food, especially that juicy steak. Shiraz is hugely versatile and works well in blends, most often with its Rhône-style counterparts, Mourvèdre, Grenache and Viognier. Whilst it is considered that the 'better' versions come from areas with a hotter climate, keep your eye out for the difference in terroir and style from the cooler climate counterparts.



**From left to right:** Eagles' Nest Shiraz 2013, by **Eagles' Nest Wines**, RRP: R255. Kershaw Elgin Syrah 2013, by **Richard Kershaw Wines** RRP: R375. Rust en Vrede Syrah 2013, by **Rust en Vrede**, RRP: R240. De Morgenzon Reserve Syrah 2014 by **De Morgenzon**, RRP: R240. Bellingham The Bernard Series Basket Press Syrah 2014, by **Bellingham Wines**, RRP: R180. Annandale Shiraz 2007, by **Annandale**, RRP: R350.



**Daisy Knowles** Daisy hails from the North-West Province, having grown up in Mafikeng. She spent five years in the UK, or (y)UK as she terms it, before returning to SA in 2001. She now lives and works in the fairest Cape. A most personable Personal Assistant by day, she dabbles with wine courses on the sideline to keep the brain in check and enjoys practicing the art of wine drinking at any and every chance she gets.

## Eagles' Nest Shiraz 2013

RRP: R255

[www.eaglesnestwines.com](http://www.eaglesnestwines.com)



**Daisy says:** With a funky, sketch-like label, this Shiraz had mulberries leaping out of the glass and up my nose. I enjoyed the fact that the alcohol wasn't overpowering on smell or taste, as it can be on some Shiraz's. Mulberries aside, the nose on this wine was quite shy at first, and you had to coax further aromas out with continuous swirls of the glass. Then, as if winter in Europe has set in, you are transported to a Christmas market where the smell of sweet spice and warm mulled wine float around you. Additional flavours of ripe red fruits and violets go on to work their way around every area of your mouth.

**Charlotte says:** A sweet, pungent nose, like opening up an old drawer with your grandmother's pot pourri inside after a few weeks. Earthy, yet sweet, like beetroot jam, with a touch of cinnamon and nutmeg, it is incredibly enticing and the ensuing flavours on the palate

also do not disappoint. Like my guilty viewing pleasure of Diners, Drive in and Dives, it is full of mouth-watering smoky meat flavours and a good dollop of spice, and even though you know that drinking an entire bottle would be a bad idea, I could easily slurp many glasses down alongside my pulled pork chipotle burger whilst licking its sauce from my fingers. Decadently delicious!

**Eduard says:** The conversation is fast and furious, like an old friend that wants to tell you all the news in the first ten minutes, without taking a breath. I like to sit back and listen in these situations, to see how the story unfolds in the glass. After the first rush, the character of the wine comes to the forefront, good ripe berries with a smokiness you can nearly see. A peppery aftertaste takes over from the first taste of alcohol and the tannins calm down to allow you to enjoy the fluid spiciness. I think this one is made to be bought now and opened in five years, give it a while to grow up, soften the tannins and mellow the alcohol. Only time will tell.

**“Earthy, yet sweet, like beetroot jam, with a touch of cinnamon and nutmeg, it is incredibly enticing...”**

**Ilze says:** It has a pretty plum colour, but the smell hit me at the back of the throat as if I had my first cigarette and started coughing. When it opens up, it definitely shows good flavour and length and

is almost creamy. The raspberries on the nose is quite prominent, but it is complemented by a type of bouquet garni and dusty thyme, cumin and coriander flavours. I would love to pair this with a hearty spaghetti bolognese made by an old Italian granny that gets drunk every afternoon whilst cooking up her latest wonder.

**Maru says:** This Shiraz has a lovely dark red colour with a hint of musk, white pepper and mushrooms on the nose. The first thought I had was to turn it into a winter-busting Glüwein and sip it in front of a fireplace. Its mouth feel was a bit too thin for my liking at first, but became meatier after resting. I quite enjoyed the lingering aftertaste. There was a slight burn that hit the back of my throat, so I would not recommend downing the glass in one fell swoop.

**Guest Taster Hendrik:** This wine shows a deep purple colour that is both fresh and inviting. On the nose, wonderful aromas of spice and red fruit graces one with the excitement that you are now drinking a serious wine with some interesting hidden agendas. A prominent alcohol and tannin structure brings forth an ageing potential that both excites and discourages you. Exciting is the potential of the wine after 10 years, and discouraging is the fact that you have to wait so long to drink it. This wine, I would say, is a true gem..

## Kershaw Elgin Syrah 2013

RRP: R375;

[www.richardkershawwines.co.za](http://www.richardkershawwines.co.za)



**Charlotte Spicer** *Charlotte is known amongst her friends and exasperated family as a professional “Intoxicologist”. She has worked in the wine and spirits industry for a number of years now. Apart from enjoying the odd glass or two of wine, she is partial to a wee dram of whisky and also likes to think she puts Nigella to shame in the kitchen – but doubts that she could lick her spoon that seductively...*

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**Daisy says:** Strawberries and cocoa powder play provocatively over the tongue on first sip of this ideal winter wine. The alcohol is gentle enough that you feel your mouth turn warm as flavours of cinnamon, pepper and tart cherry navigate their way through the maze of your tastebuds. The acid was fresh and held the components together well, although I was left desiring that it all lasted a little longer. Pair this Shiraz with a hearty, wintery meat dish to bring out its best - like a lamb stew or osso bucco.

**Charlotte says:** What a manly wine! If it could have a beard, wear a chequered shirt, and have an anchor tattoo on its muscly forearm, it certainly would! Great big flavours of biltong, onion marmalade and toasted oak are all prominent, and a mineral twang like rare steak makes me want to smoke a Camel and pose alongside my gigantic pimped out bakkie. If this wasn't intriguing enough, once allowed to open up, the gentler side comes to the fore and it is velvety soft and smooth on the palate. I suppose the old adage is true, maybe you shouldn't judge a book by its cover as this manly wine obviously likes to wear lace panties in his spare time.

**Eduard says:** In my book it is always difficult to blind-taste a Syrah, eliminate all the others and then you are left with the unknown. BUT, not with this one. The wine declares itself with a quiet assurance as to the quality of the cultivar it is. We're talking typical spiciness with a peppery aftertaste, rich ripe cherry flavours and an aftertaste that rolls the smokiness around your tongue in hard and balanced tannins, just right. Ready to pair with a grilled steak next to a braaivleis-fire with good friends.

**Ilze say:** Ooooh, it has such an interesting purple-brown cola colour. It is a very “Fanta grape” wine with some saltiness on the nose - if you know what I mean. Quite lovely! It's like having a slice of black forest cake in a glass with its full mouth feel and richness. This is a hardy Shiraz that you can bite into, with a lot of pepper and minerality. It takes some time to soften a bit, but once it is open your patience gets rewarded with a liquorish flavour. Definitely a Cheshire cat type of wine.

**“It's like having a slice of black forest cake in a glass with its full mouth feel and richness.”**

**Maru says:** The colour on the Kershaw Shiraz reminded me of cola with purple edges. I picked up notes of coriander - the kind you smell on biltong - and Fanta Grape. It tickled my tongue quite a bit (yum!) and had a longer, almost peppery finish. It was quite tight on the tannins, which is something I'm not quite used to.

**Guest Taster - Hendrik says:** With the good marketers and misleading labels you get these days, one can easily be misled when buying a wine. It is rarely that you get what you pay for. This wine, however, is everything but misleading. As far as I am concerned, it is right on the money. A no-nonsense spicy, red fruit Syrah. These are qualities that do not come from instant main stream winemaking. These qualities take time to establish. Here time has delivered perfect, elegant wood integration with a well developed tannin structure that brings an existing ageing potential. Now the only problem is the waiting.

## Rust en Vrede Syrah 2013

RRP: R240;

[www.rustenvrede.com](http://www.rustenvrede.com)



**Daisy says:** Greeted with whiffs of cherry coke, kirsch and popping red berries, this Shiraz desires to make a statement in your mouth. It is pleasing on the nose, even when a whiff of something medicinal floats up to you. Medicinal in the sense of the pretty



**Maru Fourie** named after the ship on which her grandmother was born, and not the internet cat, normally finds herself wrangling in a wild herd of mobile app developers. When she's offline, she experiments with wordplay, adventure games, cooking, guitar and a sporadic amount of trail running.

nurse with a flash of colourful lipstick and a warming smile as she offers you a bowl of sweets, as opposed to the large, overbearing nurse with dark eyes and a spitting syringe. After the liquid has spent some time getting to know its receptacle, aromas of liquorice and fennel develop. Black berries interwine with subtle acid and a swish of vanilla. I felt this needed to be enjoyed alongside a warm berry pie with oodles of thick cream.

**Charlotte says:** This wine shows a slightly lighter side of this otherwise powerful cultivar, with its aromas of rose petals, fresh cherry notes and almost a creamy strawberry cake-like finish to it. With its girl next door-like beauty, it is almost unfair to stand it in a roomful of supermodels, but I can still appreciate its grace and elegance even against its impressive peers. Balanced, approachable and down right delicious, this should certainly not be overlooked and is one for the cellar collection.

**Eduard says:** The colour is dark red, nearly black, in the glass with a surprising nose of sweetish plum jam and even a feeling of a flower garden in early spring. Interesting, with a twist of leather and smoke in the background. The taste declares itself with a bang on the palate, strong tannins mingled in with nice crisp tastes of fruit and spice. The follow-through on the aftertaste mellows out into soft fruitiness and a tinge of pepper. I would have liked it to linger a bit longer but that is why we can take another sip from the glass.

**Iize says:** The hue is intensely purple and there is a medicinal, herby, or grassy smell to it. Somewhat delicate and wispy. The flavours are very powerful

- cherry and red fruit with a peppery finish. The more you drink of this, the better it gets. Be patient with this one because it does become fuller after a while. Have this with a moreish deboned leg of lamb with rosemary roasted potatoes.

**Maru says:** The Rust & Vrede Shiraz is a very dark purple and had a fruitier fragrance compared to the other wines of the evening. It has a nice structure that pleases the taste buds. Much like the shy girl who receives a magical makeover in a cheesy romantic comedy, this one too opens up really nicely after a while.

**“Much like the shy girl who receives a magical makeover in a cheesy romantic comedy, this one too opens up really nicely after a while.”**

**Guest Taster Hendrik says:** At first glance this wine shows off with an intriguing deep, dark red colour. On the nose you get sweetish floral aromas outlined with an elegant red fruit finish that is normally the result of French oak barrels. This brings forth the fact that this wine will not only age well, but will perform exquisitely if consumed right now. The rum and raisin finish you get on the palate is normally a result of nice ripe berries harvested at full potential. At the end of the day this is a proper wine that will never let you down.

## De Morgenzon Reserve Syrah 2014

RRP: R240 ;

[www.demorgenzon.com](http://www.demorgenzon.com)



**Daisy says:** All I could envisage on sipping this wine was myself astride a horse, one hand around the cowboy who was steering the stallion and the other around this bottle of wine, my arm raised in the air and the words “YEE-HAH!” echoing through my ears... It smelled rich of leather and earth, with a spicy, masculine fragrance swimming through the glass. It was weighty and inky, as though each sip would be valuable. The tannin, acid and fruit were well balanced, yet each packing enough of a punch to chew on individually. Flavours of pink pepper, meat, cranberries, mint and caramel each took their turn to present themselves to the tastebuds, bowing low and gracefully as they disappeared from the tongue's platform and reversed down your throat.

**Charlotte says:** I love to find a wine with character and this one has it in spades! Imagine the most fabulous granny



**Eduard Rosenstrauch** works as a media liaison for SuperSport. He loves all sports and spending time with his family. He likes the smaller wine farms, not the impersonal tasting rooms of the big guys. Whilst he doesn't have a favourite cultivar or wine, he rather focuses on the characteristics of each wine, not caring whether it's red, white, pink or bubbly.

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you have ever met, decked out in her bedazzled purple velour tracksuit with "juicy" written across her arse, you just know that she has some great stories to tell! Despite her loud personality, she has style and poise and the comforting musk-like perfume, along with the soft, dry finish, fills you with that warm and fuzzy feeling that only strange family members can give you.

**“My kind of wine with a long, lingering aftertaste full of spice, pepper and hidden treasures of wood and fruitiness.”**

**Eduard says:** This wine speaks in capital letters, clear hard and to the point. It is dry and full of tannins, you nearly have to chew before getting to the fruitiness and I love it for this character. My kind of wine with a long, lingering aftertaste full of spice, pepper and hidden treasures of wood and fruitiness. The quality, through maturity, will bring this young wine around to speak in softer terms. Give it time, it will grow up. Keep in the cellar and then open on a special evening - fire blazing in the fireplace on a cold, rainy winter's night.

**Ilze says:** This wine has the purple colour of a king's coat - a most sought after colour in the olden days. The super dark purple reminds me of Snow White's (the original cartoon) wicked witch and the smell is of those musky pink sweets

that you eat in church - those that look like Rattex. I quite like this wine - it has some mystique, sexiness and a sense of danger in there.

**Maru says:** It felt like this wine was the physical manifestation of ruggedness. It smells of spicy leather and packs a decent punch of flavour that wrangles together a wonderfully chewy sip of red. Open this bottle with a Swiss Army knife and pair it with a Stetson hat, cowboy boots, a sunset and a horse (optional). If you're more of a stay-at-home-with-Netflix kind of person, a good Western will suffice too.

**Guest Taster Hendrik says:** Showing off with a nice, deep purple colour, this wine proved to be a serious contender at first glance. The prominent red berry and plum nose combined with an elegant pepper aroma makes me believe this is a proper Syrah that was systematically aged in French oak. The mesmerising floral aromas also makes me believe this wine was made old school style. With a little decanting this wine opens up very well and shows evidence of a spectacular wine with elegant wood integration.

## Bellingham The Bernard Series Basket Press Syrah 2014

RRP: R180

[www.bellinghamwines.com](http://www.bellinghamwines.com)



**Daisy says:** This wine escorts you to a field of purple...in both sight and taste. You can actually visualise yourself sitting amongst lavender and violets as the sky turns an elegant shade of lilac. As you sit there serenely, the breeze carries in whiffs of toasted marshmallows... Smooth and balanced, with flavours of raspberry, vanilla and mocha culminating to a deliciously long finish. It provides the drinker with a full mouth feel, where the flavours linger seductively and you want to hang on each sip. This wine is the tall, sophisticated and devilishly handsome man poised in the corner. Half in the shadows, he stands in a crisp suit and has you on the floor with just one seductive glance.



**Ilze van den Berg** is an avid fan of all things aesthetically pleasing and gastronomically satisfying. Ilze describes herself as a self-proclaimed nerd, book worm and quintessentially quirky.

**Charlotte says:** I cannot repeat the actual short hand notes I made about this wine as I'm pretty sure our lovely editor, despite her willingness for us to express our opinions openly, would not be allowed to print what is essentially wine porn... [Try me – Ed]. Allow me to include a few highlights though as reading them now did make me giggle, like this gem "I want this to roll around in my mouth forever, no, I want to roll around in a bath full of it forever" and "this is just as sexy as hell and I need a cold shower". You should be able to get the picture right? I could go on, but my final note sums it up rather nicely I think – "I'm being buried with a bottle of this. I'm done. My life is complete. Pass the bottle."

**"This wine is the tall, sophisticated and devilishly handsome man poised in the corner."**

**Eduard says:** The perfect day, wind still, small trout stream, crystal clear water, a 14-inch trout lingering in the depths. You get one chance, one perfect presentation of the fly, the perfect hook-up, play the fish, hold the fish and drink in the perfectness of the moment. A deep red colour in the glass with an open nose filled with rich berries, fruitiness, smokiness rolling on to the taste that grows in stature with every sip after a long, lingering aftertaste. White pepper, spiciness, soft balanced and established tannins. A keeper in any book, perfect – sublime!

**Ilze says:** Wow, this is darker than a corpse's blood. Don't ask how I know this! I might be the neighbour next door, with a big chest freezer and 2 cats. This wine has a magic nose to it, I would even wear it as a perfume. If I could smell like this all day, it would be great. People would just want to drink me in. It has a gorgeous full body, so yummy. Mouth-gasm! The flavours are berry, plummy black currants, some herbaciousness, with a great full mouth feel. Drink as is and then some more.

**Maru says:** This one gets my heart eye emoji vote for the evening. Maybe I favoured this wine because "Bernard" is a family name... Or, perhaps because it is just really tasty. It starts with a full-bodied sweetness, rolls into something more tangy and then finishes off with a healthy thwack of tannins. More please..

**Guest Taster Hendrik says:** This wine reminds me of an early summer's morning on a farm. The smell of just diesel, or just dust might not interest you at all, but that early morning perfect balance of diesel and dust as the tractors leave the farm yard excites you. It gives you hope. The same feeling can arise when tasting a great wine, with elegant wood integration. One can't help but get that same feeling of hope and excitement at the same time. This wine delivers the pepper, red fruit and floral foundation that can only lead to an exquisite Syrah with a magnificent ageing potential.

## Annandale Shiraz 2007

RRP: R350

[www.annandale.co.za](http://www.annandale.co.za)



**Daisy says:** Closing your eyes and smelling this wine, you are almost transported to a bygone era. It is as though you are sitting in an old attic, surrounded by books and documents from other centuries: aromas of dust and ancient furniture find their way around your nose. Toasted walnuts alongside hints of nutmeg and clove travel over the tongue, mingling with savoury notes. The sherry-like element hints at either oxygen having introduced itself into the wine over the years, or it could simply be the style in which it has been made. It is like a sweet old man extending his hand and asking for a few moments of your time – and whether you feel like it or not, is deserving of this.

**Charlotte says:** Well this wine certainly made an entrance! Amongst its younger peers it was unapologetic in its bold

oxidative style, giving the finger to the “new world” style of full blown fruit and rather celebrating the softer, toasted spice characteristics of the old world wines. Imagine plum jam, overripe black figs and marmite on toast flavours.

Whilst it is not for the unadventurous or unimaginative, it will certainly push the fence sitters off their pointy perch and create a much needed conversation around your dinner table. Isn't that what good wine should be about though? Pour them a glass, sit back and watch the debate begin.

**Eduard says:** These days a story does not get told with a “The End” any more. We must wait for the next season, keep it open and then we will enjoy the series for so much longer. You see, it keeps on giving! The wine in the glass in front of me was a difficult one to describe. I know this wine from a previous tasting and have always been blown away. I can't wait for the new season to start and taste it again.

**Ilze says:** This one has a bit of a brown tint to it, which is probably the age that is showing. It reminds me of purple nurple sweets and smells like wet leaves. The fruit flavours are quite solid with overripe black chewy jammy figs. I would guess this wine is made in an oxidative style. It is very meaty and has a sweet muscovite brown sugar smell to it - almost sherry like. Drink as soon as possible with stinky and creamy cheeses.

**Maru says:** After the first whiff, it was immediately apparent that this Shiraz was quite unlike the others. It's bold, almost to the point where it teeters on the brink of dangerousness, and it makes a lasting impression. I enjoyed the

aroma of figs, pepper, and subtle traces of muscovado. I would definitely make an effort and hunt some more bottles down to add to my collection. And by “collection” I mean my belly,

**“It is not often that you buy wine off the shelf that is at its optimum drinking potential.”**

**Guest Taster Hendrik says:** With risk comes reward. Risk and cash flow often force many producers to release vintages before they might necessarily prefer to. It is not often that you buy wine off the shelf that is at its optimum drinking potential. Luckily every now and then you get the producer who is willing to take the risk, and if it pays off, you get a seriously eye opening surprise. This wine has to be treated with respect, and therefore given enough time to open up after opening the bottle. If you do this, you will be rewarded with balanced red fruit flavours, perfectly integrated tannins and a lacy vanilla aftertaste

## Guest Taster - Hendrik Herfurth

Having cut his teeth in wine production, Hendrik has been involved in a range of areas within the wine industry, including sales and distribution for a range of wine and spirits brands. Today he works for Radoux, supplying their wine industry clients with a range of solutions to make their winemaking processes slicker in order to produce the best possible wines.

