

A Penfolds Collection of splendour



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HUON HOOKE

In NEW AND NOTEWORTHY



The Penfolds Collection 2023. [PENFOLDS WINES](#)

The annual Penfolds Collection tasting grows bigger year by year, this time numbering 26 wines. Not a dud among them—26 wines of varying degrees of splendour.

The highlight was something buyers won't be able to experience, but served to remind we jaded wine writing hacks how good Grange can be when it's accorded a suitable period of maturation. Chief winemaker Peter Gago and his team served the new vintage of [Grange](#) (this

The 2019 follows the feted 2018, and there's no reason to suspect it won't follow the well-trodden maturation path of a classic

year 2019) at the end of the event, but this time they put beside it Granges from 10, 20 and 30 years earlier: the 2009, 1999 and 1989 vintages.

These wines perfectly demonstrated the character of Grange as it ages:

- 2019 – saturated red-purple colour; espresso coffee, tar, blackberry, dark chocolate, dried cranberry, various herbs and spices
- 2009 – roasted meats, toasted nuts and mocha aromas, still quite robust
- 1999 – mature cigarbox, roasting-pan, roasted chestnut, traces of mocha: classic aged shiraz
- 1989 – licorice/aniseed, roasted nuts, dried figs, dried cranberries, mocha and cocoa-powder; fully mature.

These were a real treat to taste, especially the 1989, never a highly fancied vintage in the past (perhaps the twin greats of 1990 and 1991 overshadowed it) but a classic mature Grange.

Also, even the not-so-exalted vintages come into their own with age, by which time the caterpillar has turned into a butterfly. The 2019 follows the feted 2018, and there's no reason to suspect it won't follow the well-trodden maturation path of a classic Grange.





Penfolds Chief Winemaker Peter Gago. [PENFOLDS WINES](#)

Other highlights?

2021 is the key vintage for this year's releases. It was a wonderful vintage throughout South Australia (and other parts of the country, but Penfolds wines are mostly SA). Yields were reduced but the quality is described variously in Penfolds' booklet of wine notes as 'excellent', 'brilliant' and 'outstanding'.

[Bin 169 Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon 2021](#) was my highest scoring wine with 98 points, and at AUD \$300 it seems relatively good value.

Close behind it on 97 points were the [2019 Grange](#), [2021 RWT Shiraz](#), [2021 Yattarna Chardonnay](#), the [2020 Bin 149 Napa Valley/South Australia Cabernet Sauvignon](#), and [2019 Quantum Bin 98 Cabernet Sauvignon](#), a Napa Valley / South Australia blend. This last wine is a running-mate for Grange as both are priced at AUD \$1,000 a bottle (Grange's price is unchanged from last year's).

On 96 points were [2021 Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon](#), [2021 Magill Estate Shiraz](#) and [2022 Reserve Bin A Chardonnay](#).

Special mention goes to one of the cheaper wines of the Collection:

[Penfolds Bin 128 Coonawarra Shiraz](#) (AUD \$65 and 95 points). This is a stunning Bin 128: packed with flavour, its multi-faceted fragrance positively leaps from the glass.

Of the international wines which are now an integral part of the Collection, we see two French wines ([2020 Bin FWT 585](#), a Bordeaux cabernet merlot petit verdot) and Penfolds x Dourthe II Cabernet Shiraz Merlot, a multi-vintage (2020-21) blend of South Australia and Bordeaux grapes.

We also see five wines resulting from the Californian venture. Three are Californian reds, two are South Australia/Napa Valley blends. High-priced wines which it's impossible to fault. No doubt critics will be higher on some and lower on others, but quality-wise it's really just a cigarette paper between them.

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One of the Californians, Bin 600, is a cabernet shiraz blended from Paso Robles shiraz and Napa Valley cabernet. At AUD \$90 it's the cheapest of the international wines, but heavens it's good, and is an interesting new take on the classic Aussie cab-shiraz blend. This time the shiraz comes from California's best shiraz region, the cabernet from its best cabernet region. We can perceive the cassis and blackberry of the cabernet and the smoky/graphite of the shiraz, much as you might in an Aussie cab-shiraz. Serendipity.

PENFOLDS COLLECTION



Penfolds Grange 2019

#4 of 540 2019 Shiraz

FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Very deep, dense, saturated red-purple colour that stains the glass, with a classic Grange nose of espresso coffee, tar, blackberry, dark chocolate and dried cranberry. Quite complex already with notes of various spices, dried herbs and underbrush. The wine is full-bodied and firm, with abundant tannins but not as formidably dense, thick and tannic as some vintages. Very intense and long. A very solid Grange, if not a great one. (3% cabernet sauvignon. Barossa, McLaren Vale, Coonawarra & Clare)

97/100

DRINK 2026-2046 HUON HOOKE

AUD 1000

NZD 1000



Penfolds Bin 169

Penfolds Bin 109**Coonawarra...**

2021

#2 of 41 2021 Cabernet

Sauvignon from

Coonawarra

Very deep, saturated purple-red colour with a similarly intense bouquet of cassis, blackberry, blackcurrant and mulberry, not leafy, and oak is very much under control. The wine has terrific intensity and drive, masses of firm but refined tannins that run the full length of the palate and endure long into the finish. Impressive wine indeed. A truly superb cabernet of classic intensity, structure and palate length.

98/100

DRINK 2025-2046 HUON HOOKE

AUD 300





Penfolds RWT Bin 798 Barossa Valley...

2021

#7 of 183 2021 Shiraz

from Barossa Valley

Very deep, saturated purple-red colour; brown/woody spices and earthy/stony aromas layered with black fruits and tar. Smoky oak very present but balanced. Very firm and full-bodied, a powerhouse of a wine, the tannins coating the mouth. A big, bold, brawny wine in typical style, with mouth-gripping tannins and formidable length. Cellaring recommended!

97/100

DRINK 2025–2043 HUON HOOKE

AUD 200





Penfolds Yattarna Chardonnay

2021

#21 of 674 2021

Chardonnay from
Australia

Light bright yellow colour; a very restrained, waxy and lemon pith bouquet, a smidgin of lightly browned toast starting up. Taut, restrained palate: a very fine wine. Citron, candied lemon peel. Searing intensity, tremendous persistence. Superb wine, and it will blossom given a little time. (Tasmania, Tumbarumba, Adelaide Hills)

97/100

DRINK 2025-2037 HUON HOOKE

AUD 175





Penfolds Bin 149 Napa Valley South... 2020

#11 of 282 2020

Cabernet Sauvignon
from World

Bell-clear blueberry and cassis aromas, very cabernet, superbly ripe, backed by ample cedary/toasty/smoky oak; very stylish. Palate is elegant and intense, concentrated and refined, linear and suave, with a long, long carry. This really begs for time but has the elegance to drink well as a youngster too. (Napa Valley and South Australia)

97/100

DRINK 2025-2043 HUON HOOKE

AUD 250





Penfolds Bin 98 Quantum Napa...

2019

#8 of 418 2019

Cabernet Sauvignon
from World

Stylish and strongly varietal cedar/cassis aromas, berries of blue and black and red shades, a hint of leafiness setting it apart from the other Penfolds US cabernets. The palate is tense and tightly composed, firm and high-tensioned, with grit and grip neatly focused at the finish. The tannins are not overly mouth-coating or chewy but insistent, and the overall impression is of elegance and potential. Great potential. (Napa Valley & South Australia)

97/100

DRINK 2026-2043 HUON HOOKE

AUD 1000





Penfolds Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon 2021

#8 of 199 2021

Cabernet Sauvignon

from South Australia

Concentrated red-purple colour; aromas of blackberry and assorted dark fruits, plums and mulberry, with a layer of smoky savoury nuances but not overtly oaky. The wine is massive on the palate: very full-bodied and firm, gripping and dense, with a very long finish and follow-through. A sturdy cabernet that seems less oaky and formidable this year, and which will richly reward long-term cellaring. (Coonawarra, Barossa, Wrattenbully)

96/100

DRINK 2026–2046 HUON HOOKE

AUD 800



Penfolds Magill Estate Shiraz

2021

#44 of 563 2021

Shiraz from South

Australia

Deep, dark, saturated purple-red colour; a very fragrant, lifted nose with essency black-plum aromas, blood plums, very deep and somewhat singular at this juncture, the tannins velvet smooth and just doing their job nicely in the background. An elegant wine of excellent balance and mouth-feel.

96/100

DRINK 2024–2041 HUON HOOKE

AUD 165



Penfolds Reserve Bin A Chardonnay 2022

#6 of 85 2022

Chardonnay from
Adelaide Hills

Light yellow colour; bright lemon rind, beeswax aromas of refined, restrained complexity, oak invisible. Nougat, gently toasted hazelnuts and honey also. Brilliant refinement and intensity, crisp and delicate, marvellous harmony of components. Long persistence allied with low-alcohol delicacy. A wine of real finesse.

96/100

DRINK 2024-2037 HUON HOOKE

AUD 125



Penfolds Bin 128 Coonawarra Shiraz 2021

#5 of 19 2021 Shiraz
from Coonawarra

Very deep, dark, brooding red/black/purple colours; amazing blackberry and iodine, graphite and violets on the nose, powerful and leaping from the glass. Very deep flavour, fills the mouth and has breadth as well as depth. A riot of fragrances here. Full bodied, supple and fleshy in the tannin department, with a lovely supple finish. Soft acidity. A stunningly good Bin 128.

95/100

DRINK 2023–2039 HUON HOOKE

AUD 65



Penfolds FWT 585 Cabernet Sauvigno...

2020

Deep, dense red-purple with superbly concentrated, essency blue fruit and violet aromas, touches of graphite and iron-stone, palate just full bodied and firm with a trace of bitterness in the tannins and good extract/fleshiness. Will reward cellar time. (52% cabernet sauvignon, 41% merlot, 7% petit verdot)

94/100

DRINK 2024-2036 HUON HOOKE

AUD 120





Penfolds Bin 600 Cabernet Sauvigno...

2020

Concentrated cassis, blackberry and smoky/graphite aromas; an inky wine, very dense and dominated by chewy tannins which give a thickness to the palate. Amazing power and concentration. A very long-term wine. (68% cabernet sauvignon, 32% shiraz from Napa Valley and Paso Robles)

95/100

DRINK 2025-2041 HUON HOOKE

AUD 90

<https://www.therealreview.com/2023/07/20/a-penfolds-collection-of-splendour>

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