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Wine

Shottesbrooke
Punch
Cabernet
Sauvignon
2005



For years, Nick Holmes of Shottesbrooke stuck to his guns, making traditional red wines of moderate alcohol while most others in the McLaren Vale region scaled up to the modern, body-slammer style of red. In comparison with those of his peers, Holmes's Shottesbrooke wines often looked light, lean and even a touch green (read: borderline underripe grapes). I admired his determination not to sell out, even if I didn't always love the wines.

But lately there's been a subtle change. Now the Shottesbrooke reds are scoring high in my tastings and I'm enjoying drinking them. They are riper-flavoured, richer and fuller in body and up around 14.5 per cent alcohol instead of 13.5 per cent. They're in no way overdone, just more appealing with deeper, sweeter fruit and more horsepower. It might be coincidence, but in recent years Nick Holmes's stepson, Hamish Maguire, has been listed as winemaker, while Holmes is the viticulturalist. The 2005 vintage is a very good one and here are two absolute rippers.

Shottesbrooke Punch Cabernet

Sauvignon 2005, \$38 Bright, bold cassis fruit coupled with smart oak on the nose; intense and elegant in the mouth; rich, sweet fruit and more depth than The Proprietor; also marvellously stylish and varietal. Drink now to 12-plus years. 93/100.

Shottesbrooke The Proprietor Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot Malbec 2005, \$28

Minty, berry and faintly tomato-like aromas, leaning towards the herbal/crushed-leaf style. Good weight and depth with abundant ripe tannins, and blueberry/raspberry-like flavours. Drink now to eight-plus years. 90/100. **GW**

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