

2023 District Tasting Summary.

Summary of the 2022 vintage McLaren Vale Shiraz wines tasted blind in district groups

Date: Wednesday 8th of February 2023

Location: Wirra Wirra Vineyards

Authors: Drew Noon & Wes Pearson

Aim: To identify common taste characteristics in relation to districts.

Methodology: Sixty-eight 2022 shiraz samples comprising 3 x 750ml bottles, from tank, neutral or mature oak, were submitted from 29 Wineries representing 15 of the 19 currently defined districts of McLaren Vale. Wine producers submit the previous vintage's Shiraz samples originating from a single vineyard source, and upon receipt of the samples the producer marks the location of the sample on a district map.

Submitted wines were blended according to district and a control sample was composed of a blend of all wines representing the fifteen districts. Using the Pivot Profile Sensory Analysis system (first used in 2021) 13 experienced winemakers and viticulturalists, representative of the McLaren Vale region, assessed the wines under blind tasting conditions.

Analysis: The resulting Pivot Profile data was analysed by Dr Wes Pearson (AWRI).

Districts represented: 15 of the 19 districts those not represented were (8,13,15,19)

Tutorial & public tasting: Friday 10 February with 60 plus winemakers, viticulturalist and grapegrowers in attendance.

Tasting Panel: Using the Pivot Profile Sensory Analysis system 13 experienced winemakers and viticulturalists representative of the McLaren Vale region assessed the wines. Duncan Kennedy, Chester Osborn, Emma Bekkers, Michael Fragos, Anton Groffen, Kim Jackson, Fabiano Minchella, Emma Wood, Rachel Steer, Charles Whish, Jodie Armstrong (MVGWTA), Drew Noon, Wes Pearson (moderator).

Vintage 2022 Grower Conditions: 2021-2022 was another lovely growing season, the second to benefit from La Nina conditions with good winter and spring rainfall and an absence of damaging summer heatwaves. Crops were generally lower than 2021 and the harvest proceeded at a steady pace during March and April thanks to mild weather and no significant rain events. Wine quality is excellent.

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Pivot Profile rapid sensory Methodology and Results

Pivot profile is a free description method that can use the well-developed lexicon of professional wine tasters (winemakers, sommeliers, wine buyers, etc.) as an asset. Panellists use a 'pivot' or control wine – in this case a blend of ALL the district blends, as a reference for assessing the samples. Judges refer to the pivot and then the samples, then write descriptors based on how the sample differs from the control. The format for these descriptors is to use any term the judge chooses; however, the degree modifier 'less' or 'more' is used in conjunction with the descriptor. By controlling this degree modifier, the scope of the descriptors is moderated. For example: without controlling the degree modifier, judges when using the term sweet to describe a wine, could add on the degree modifiers: moderately, very, not so, highly, a little, a bit, slightly, etc. This is confusing to analyse and inflates the frequency of use of the word sweet, while not accurately reflecting how the term was used. By having to use either less x than the pivot or more y than the pivot (less sweet, more astringent), the judge is obligated to fit the term into one of two categories but is still free to use their creativity and personal interpretation to describe the sample. The results are then subject to the correspondence analysis statistical evaluation and a sensory biplot or 'map' is produced to show how a particular sample is correlated to a particular attribute (they are located close to each other on the sensory biplot), or how it may be negatively correlated (opposed to one another on the biplot).

The sensory biplot for the 2023 MV Districts samples can be seen below (figure 1).

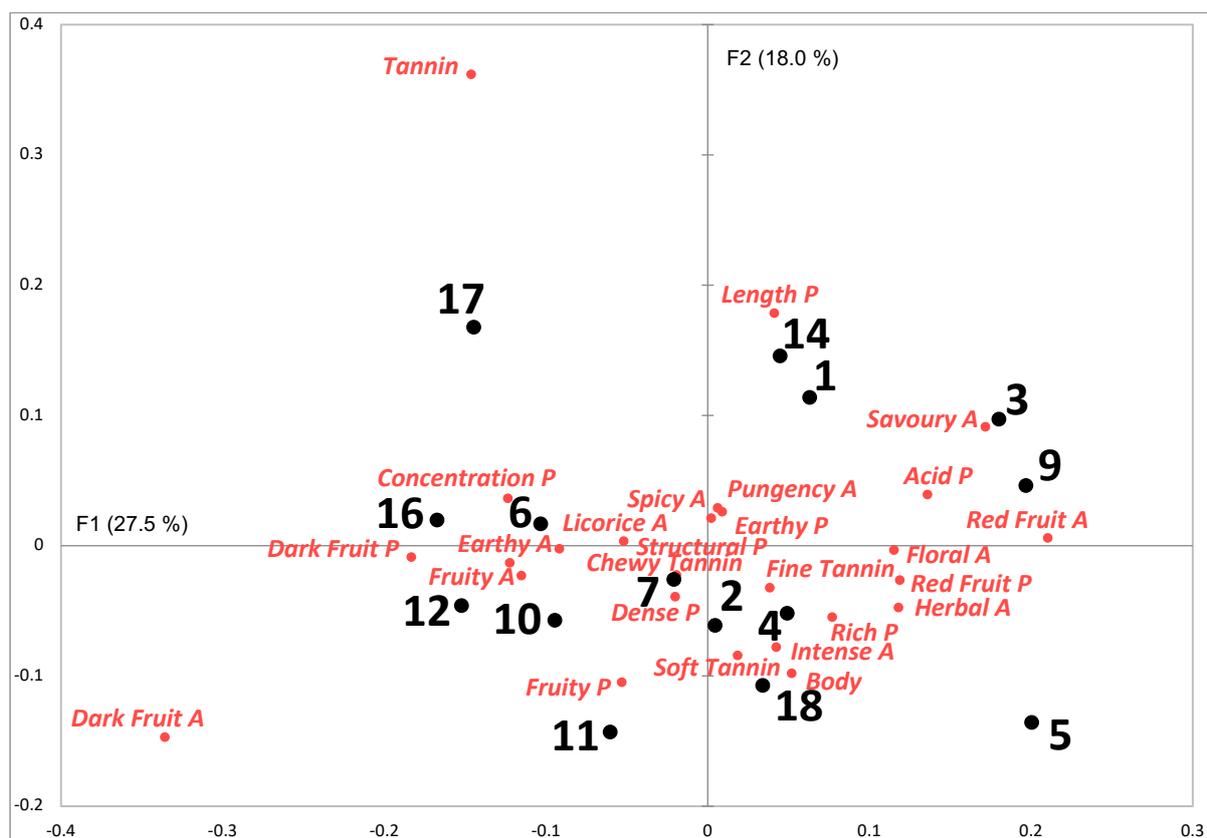


Figure 1. Sensory biplot of factors 1 and 2 of the Pivot Profile analysis of the 2023 MV Districts wines, explaining 45.5% of the variance in the model. An A after an attribute denotes Aroma, while a P denotes Palate.

Evaluating the biplot requires examining what samples are located close to what attributes, and what samples are opposed to what attributes. In this case, the sensory attributes located the farthest

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away from the origin would be what could be called the attributes that are the most polarizing. The attributes Dark Fruit Aroma and Tannin are the ones furthest away from the origin, meaning they did the best job at separating the samples. The samples close to these two attributes, would be considered high in those attributes, and the samples farthest away from them would be considered the lowest in them. In this case, Districts 12, 14, 16, and 17 appear to be highest in Tannin, while Districts 5, 9 and 18 would be the lowest. Districts 11, 12, and 16 would similarly be highest in Dark Fruit Aroma, while 1, 3, 5, 9, and 14 would be lowest. Districts 1, 14, and 17 would be high in Length of flavour, while 5, 11, and 18 would be low for that attribute. Evaluating the attributes on the biplot, along factor 1 (horizontal axis, left to right), Dark Fruit aroma/palate on the left side, while Red Fruit aroma/palate are to the right side. Factor 2 (North to South/top to bottom) separates the samples most by the attribute tannin, with Tannin at the top to the axis and Soft Tannin at the bottom. Body is also located next to Soft Tannin, which is a logical association.

Factors 1 and 3 of the sensory biplot (explaining an additional 13.0% of the variance) can be seen in figure 2.

This Sensory evaluation of the MV Districts samples builds on the more than a decade of anecdotal tasting completed by the MV Districts committee. By formalising this sensory evaluation, the MV Districts project can begin to legitimise the findings they have accumulated over the past years of the initiative. With continued evaluations of these wine into the future, this project hopes to add value to McLaren Vale wine producers, who can push their products further into a premium price category, with an understanding of the unique sensory profiles associated with the place where the wines have come from.

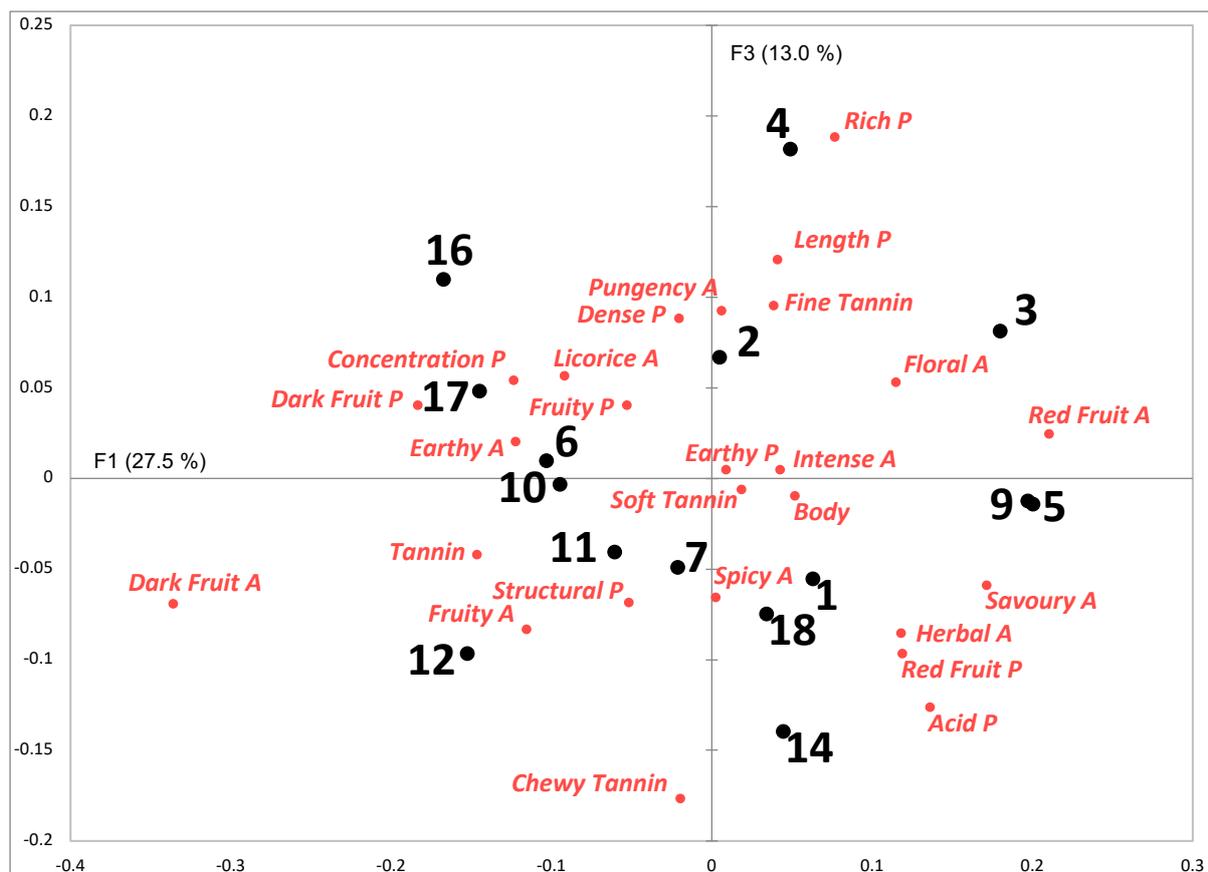


Figure 2. Factors 1 and 3 of the MV Districts samples sensory biplot.

The following table is summary of the district wines using traditional tasting procedures and the well-developed lexicon of professional wine tasters.

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Table 1: Summary of tasting results for Vintage 2022 McLaren Vale Districts Shiraz Wines

District	No. of wines submitted	Nominal name/general area	Summary of tasting description: [indicates provisional finding due to low no. of entries]	Tannin analysis g/l
1	4	<i>Sellicks Foothills</i>	Aroma: intense fruit, spicy, more red fruit, less dark fruit. Palate: higher acidity, less dense/rich, earthy, long finish	1.63
2	2	<i>Delabole Foothills</i>	[Aroma: less fruit driven, spicy, chocolate. Palate: med-full bodied/rich, fine tannin, viscous]	[1.68]
3	8	<i>Willunga Foothills</i>	Aroma: low in dark fruit, floral, high in red fruit, savoury Palate: red fruit, rich, medium acidity, medium density, earthy, fine tannin, savoury	1.67
4	3	<i>Aldinga Plains</i>	[Aroma: confection, red fruit, floral, intense Palate: medium bodied, medium density, low tannin, rich/round/viscous mouthfeel]	[1.34]
5	1	<i>Whites Ridge</i>	[Aroma: low in fruit, herbal, reduced. Palate: full bodied, fresh, low fruit concentration, low tannin]	[1.32]
6	2	<i>Gloucester Sands</i>	[Aroma: earthy, some liquorice Palate: full bodied, chewy tannin, dark fruit, dense, savoury, long]	[2.23]
7	1	<i>Maslin Coast</i>	[Aroma: dark fruit, intense, herbal, fruit driven. Palate: med-high acid, earthy, savoury, soft tannin]	[1.76]
8	0	<i>Noarlunga Embayment</i>	*	*
9	6	<i>Onkaparinga Rocks</i>	Aroma: low dark fruit, floral, herbal, high red fruit, spicy Palate: medium body, acid, touch hot, herbal, structured	1.75
10	10	<i>Beautiful View</i>	Aroma: dark fruit, chocolate, herbal, liquorice Palate: dense, drying tannin, fruit driven, structured	1.97
11	1	<i>The Gateway</i>	[Aroma: dark fruit, fruit driven, herbal. Palate: medium bodied, fine tannin, fruit driven]	[1.52]
12	12	<i>Blewitt Sands</i>	Aroma: dark fruit, fruit driven, liquorice, pepper, spicy Palate: med-high acidity, medium-full bodied, chewy tannin, dark fruit, concentrated, structured	1.90
13	0	<i>Bakers Flat</i>	*	*
14	2	<i>Clarendon Rocks</i>	[Aroma: herbal, savoury, red fruit Palate: high acidity, chewy tannin, red fruit, spicy]	[1.90]
15	0	<i>Range Escarpment</i>	*	*
16	5	<i>McLaren Alluvium</i>	Aroma: dark fruit, earthy Palate: low acidity, concentrated, dark fruit, soft tannin	1.67
17	4	<i>McLaren Sandhills</i>	Aroma: confection, earthy, liquorice Palate: full bodied, drying tannin, chocolate, dark fruit, long finish	2.19
18	3	<i>Kurrajong Landslide</i>	[Aroma: intense, pepper Palate: full bodied, dense, red fruit, soft tannin, low flavour concentration, spice, short finish]	[1.79]
19	0	<i>O'Halloran Rocks</i>	*	*