

## WINE MASTERCLASS JANE FAULKNER

# Spicy and seductive

**Wine:** Scorpo Shiraz 2001

**Chosen by:** Nicole Tuckwell, sales manager  
Torbreck Vintners

**Price:** about \$30

**Purchase:** limited stocks, Randall the Wine  
Merchant, Albert Park and Rathdowne Cellars  
Carlton

**C**all it *terroir*. Call it passion. Or simply a commitment to making great wine while understanding the attributes of a patch of land, the appropriate grape varieties, winemaking skill and that inexplicable touch of magic. The result is Scorpo. A vineyard that is part of a new wave of Mornington Peninsula wines.

Established in 1997, the small-scale winery at Merricks is the brainchild or love child of Paul Scorpo and family; the wine is made by the talented Sandro Mosele, from Kooyong Estate on the same peninsula.

There's not much land — about 5 hectares — with shiraz planted on 0.5 of a hectare. So what's Scorpo shiraz all about?

"Firstly, what I love is the colour," says award-winning former sommelier Nicole Tuckwell. "People think of cool climate shiraz as being insipid or transparent, but this wine certainly isn't. It's a beautiful, ruby, garnet colour."

"The next thing I love is the perfume; beautiful, red berry fruits with a real spiciness to it like sweet cinnamon and some savoury notes, like white pepper."

Unlike, say, big, bold Barossa shiraz, "This wine is not trying to be a masculine-style, bally shiraz. This is a feminine-style wine."

How so? "It's feminine because it's not divulging itself completely; it's giving you a little hint of what it's about, but not telling you its whole life story with one taste. This wine changes all the time. It has charm and grace. It's seductive. That's feminine."



This shiraz might smell a bit pongy when first opened; not a big deal, it's a bit of sulphide that will blow off with a good decant or left to breathe for a while in a big glass. After some breathing space, this wine tastes superb.

Tuckwell enthuses: "It tastes spicy, spicy, spicy. Yum. It's just beautiful. It's quite a seamless wine. It's not trying to be a blockbuster. Again, there are the red berry flavours, even crushed cranberries coming through. It's concentrated, quite dense, mouth-filling without being overbearing. And it finishes clean in the palate — long, with fresh, great flavours."

Scorpo shiraz is drinking beautifully now, but should be even better in another couple of years.

"And this is a real food wine. Start this shiraz with a gamey bird, maybe quail stuffed with olives, with some base flavours of beetroot, even figs. Those sweet, salty, savoury notes will go beautifully. Move to main course with some chewy-meat flavours, such as duck confit, and finish off with a bitey cheese like Pyengana cheddar."

This wine is not a 10-buck-chuck, says Tuckwell. "It's a \$30 single-vineyard Mornington shiraz and you are going to want to look at it again and again because it's full of finesse. A really elegant wine. Ah, a real lady."

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Nicole Tuckwell