

# Seduction in a glass

**I**'ve never been one to be persuaded by wine labels. Clever as some of these branding aesthetics may be, I think it's fair to say that by now, we all know we shouldn't judge a book by its cover. And yet wineries continue implementing the most astute marketing tactics, hoping to spark our interest enough to grab their bottles off the shelf.

Admittedly, when I came across the Two Hands Wines' Sexy Beast Cabernet Sauvignon, I was intrigued, albeit somewhat apprehensively. Perhaps even 'seduced' would be a better word. Not only did the catchy name tickle the depths of my imagination, but oh, that label! A close-up of a kiss so succulent it made me blush. Would the wine, however, live up to its ambrosial promise? I caressed the bottle and poured myself a glass in delicious anticipation. But first, some background about Two Hands Wines.

When Aussie friends Michael Twelftree and Richard Mintz decided to go into winemaking back in 1999, their mission was to craft excellent wines from Australia's flagship red varietal – Shiraz – highlighting the unique terroir and diversity of the region's vineyards. Based in the renowned Barossa Valley in South Australia, the winery is committed to a meticulous winemaking process, which includes small-batch fermentation, oak ageing and a focus on individual vineyard expressions. While Shiraz remains the focal point of the winery, their portfolio, which includes five series, also reflects a dedication to applying their winemaking philosophy to other varietals such as Grenache, Riesling, Mourvèdre – and the Cabernet Sauvignon (after Shiraz, Australia's most-planted grape) that is part of their 'Picture Series'. As stated on the winery's website, the 'aim' of this series "is to bring a smile to your face when you pick up the bottle, reminding you that wines should be approachable and of course... fun."

Truth be told, "fun" doesn't necessarily come to mind when I think of Cabernet Sauvignon, especially those from France, to which I am quite partial. Playing a

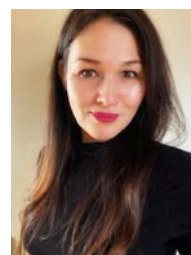


leading role in blends, to me, the grape implies the structure and posh complexity typically synonymous with Bordeaux's maritime climate and gravelly soils, particularly found on the Left Bank. Plant the grape in the Mediterranean McLaren Vale region, located to the southwest of Barossa Valley, and the result is a less highbrow and more fruit-forward, luscious wine. Here, the grape is allowed to take centre stage, showing its full potential in single-vineyard wines.

The 2022 vintage of Two Hands' Sexy Beast exhibits a dense viscosity (courtesy of a 14.5% alcohol content) and a deep garnet-purple hue. On the nose, the wine opens with an abundance of ripe blackcurrants and cassis that give way to nuances of warm spice (cloves) and fresh, herbaceous notes. On the palate, the plush fruit is supported by well-structured tannins with hints of smoke and cocoa coming through on the long finish. With proper decanting, it's certainly a juicy yet broad-shouldered sip that titillates the taste buds, especially if paired with a bold, richly textured dish such as an herb-infused melanzane alla parmigiana.

**Available at [vinvinwines.nl](http://vinvinwines.nl)**

## PAOLA WESTBEEK



Food and wine journalist. Her work has appeared in **FRANCE Magazine (UK)**, **Leven in Frankrijk (NL)** and **Culture (USA)**. Her French gastronomy columns appeared in **En Route (NL)**. She is the food and drinks columnist for **Reader's Digest (UK)**.