

**Wine of the Week - Barrel monkeys' private reserve**  
*By KATE MURPHY of the Missoulian*



**Wine of the Week**

2004 Red Heads Studio Barrel Monkeys Shiraz, McLaren Vale, Australia

Whether it's a funny-looking dog, a fancy logo or an arresting landscape, many of us choose wines based solely on the way the label looks. This week's pick is for those of you who fall into this category. And not to worry: The juice inside is as captivating and lively as the outside label.

A man by the name of Tony Laithwaite, an Englishman and a quiet force in international wine trade, recently bought an old bar in Australia's McLaren Vale and renamed it Red Heads Studio. He outfitted it with winemaking equipment, then invited ambitious winemakers to try their hand at making small batches of wine from grapes found throughout the region. Many of the winemaking recruits already work as "barrel monkeys" in large corporate wineries. The term refers to winemakers just starting out in the business, whose job entails dragging hoses and moving equipment and barrels around the winery. Laithwaite saw the latent possibility of these "monkeys," many of whom harbor an ambition to create wine with their own personal imprints. So he decided to lease out the Red Heads Studio and provide these winemakers a rare opportunity to fulfill their dreams.

This week's wine pick reflects the passion, spirit and perhaps overlooked skills of the moonlighting barrel monkeys. Red Heads Studio Barrel Monkeys Shiraz is a full-throttle, in-your-face fruit bomb and a fitting representation of the panache and gusto that keeps these barrel monkeys going.

The Barrel Monkeys Shiraz is a deep, saturated, brooding ruby/purple color with aromas of sweet blackberry, plum and licorice. The concentrated palate offers an impressive mouthful of raspberry, blackberry, dried plum and dark cherry liqueur. These bold fruit flavors are layered with hints of spice, mocha, white pepper and black licorice. This wine is smooth and full-bodied, with good structure to support its big fruit flavor.

You can find this wine at Good Food Store and Pattee Creek Market for \$18.

Pairing this wine is easy as it gets in it can hold its own with a wide range of flavors and foods. It elevated a simple meal of baked beans and a burger for me, and would do the same for a spicy Mexican feast or any of your favorite barbecue specialties. Right now, however, I'm thinking this wine was made for a big, warm bowl of spicy jambalaya with shrimp, chicken and andouille sausage. Perhaps you should consider this pairing during tomorrow's tailgate party, or better yet, after we win tomorrow's big homecoming game. Go Griz!

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