



2004 d'Arenberg Vintage Fortified Shiraz

100% McLaren Vale Shiraz

The grapes for this wine come from a block destined for our Dead Arm wine. Instead, we leave the grapes an extra couple of weeks and then fortify the wine with a spirit that is full of character that is added half way through the ferment.



The Name

This wine is perhaps a little old-fashioned, as it doesn't have what we call an individual concept name like all the others. Up until the 1950's, all of the Shiraz was used for producing a Port styled wine hence the near original label has been retained for this wine for posterity.

The Vintage

After excellent winter rains and then a warm wet spring the vineyards were set for a good start to vintage. Flowering and set was consistent and then we experienced an unusually cold January followed by a warm to hot February and mild conditions through March and April.

Various old vine vineyard blocks were selected for this wine due to berry size, varying flavour development and tannin structures. Overall our vineyards delivered exceptional fruit for this classic wine style due to the thickness of the skins which is so important for colour and intensity of fruit flavour.

The Winemaking

The grapes are fermented in the traditional d'Arenberg way – minimal processing which involves up to two weeks fermenting on skins in traditional headed down open fermenters, foot treading, followed by basket pressing through the 19th century 'Coq' and "Bromley & Tregoning" presses. After basket pressing, a small amount of fine, fortifying brandy spirit is added, ending fermentation and retaining the sweet fruit and richness of the style.

The d'Arenberg Vintage Fortified wine is made from a single vintage, and does not spend any time in wood prior to bottling. Unlike the Nostalgia Tawny, the Vintage Fortified wine will develop for many years in the bottle before it reaches its peak.

The Characteristics

This is probably the finest release yet in five decades or so of d'Arenberg's 'Vintage Fortified' Shiraz. The wine is extremely fine and has elegance about it which we attribute to a cooler year than most. The wine has a consistent deep, intense garnet red/black appearance, matched by intense aromas of ripe blackberry fruits, spice and liquorice, combined with a lifted (and slightly 'taily') brandy spirit. Blueberry/blackberry, licorice, anise, spice and mulberry fruits are evident on the structured young palate.

The initial attack of primary fruit flavours, combined with the integrated, unwooded brandy spirit ensure the palate is full-flavoured balanced with very fine, almost tea like tannins and the dry impact of the spirit. Just wonderful!

With significant bottle age, 'The Vintage Fortified' Shiraz gains extraordinary complexity. The intense young colour becomes a lighter, more ruby-red initially, then quite amber. Fruit and brandy spirit integrate further, making way for whiffs of rose, chocolate/walnut, coffee, orange/cumquat peel smells. The palate becomes more balanced and develops further complexity with notes of caramelised figs, dark chocolate, malt, coffee and vanilla mixed with tobacco-like flavours with a finish that's very soft and delicate yet with obvious spirit character.

'The Vintage Fortified' Shiraz can cellar if given the right conditions for an extraordinary time and worth the experience.



Artist Tony Rafty©

Technical Information

Harvest Date:
21 April

Alcohol by Vol: 17.5%
Residual Sugar: 102.4 g/L

Bottling Date:
3 March 2005

Oak Maturation:
No oak maturation

Titrateable Acid: 5.7 g/L
pH: 3.65

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