



2005 d'Arenberg The Vintage Fortified

100% McLaren Vale Shiraz (68%) / Chambourcin (32%)

Normally the grapes for this wine come from a block destined for our Dead Arm Shiraz which we leave for a further couple of weeks. This year one of the press crew pressed an open fermenter of Chambourcin and added it to The Vintage Fortified vat by accident. Fortunately it was a very ripe one. Umm, now we have an exciting new wine style which Chester didn't know about nor had ever thought of before. Sometimes that's the d'Arenberg way!

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

A vintage summarised as a vintage that ripened without interruptions and producing moderate yields. Low to moderate winter rain with good following rains in November enabled adequate moisture to support the potential crop load and allow it to ripen over summer. The summer was cool and dry followed by a very dry warm autumn which was unusual. This allowed many varieties to ripen early and without interruptions. The fruit has great floral aromatics with good intensity and perfectly balanced with excellent concentration, flavour development and length as well as lovely ripe, gritty tannins. Nearly every variety we harvested exceeded classified expectations due to the exceptional autumn conditions.

The Winemaking

After the slight mishap, the Shiraz and Chambourcin were co-fermented in the traditional d'Arenberg way of minimal processing and handling with the fruit on its skins in headed-down, open fermenters. Half way through the ferment, after foot treading, we pressed the wine off using our 19th century 'Coq' and "Bromley & Tregoning" presses. After basket pressing, we arrest the fermentation by adding a fine, fortifying brandy spirit that is full of character and compliments the fruit flavours. 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

The wine has a very deep black appearance with a wonderful crimson deep cherry red hue. Intense aromas of ripe, blackberry fruits, liquorice appear first followed by prune-like notes with deep spicy plum pudding characters. As it opens, deeper blackberry mulberry fruits with anise evolve combined with a lifted (and slightly 'taily') brandy spirit which is most appealing. 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' made with 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 roses, chocolate/walnut, coffee and 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.

While we've never made a wine like this blend before we know that Chambourcin ages beautifully and exotically with strength of character and acidity. We suspect with time there will be greater emphasis of tannins and a strong rose bush and chicken feather notes (not dissimilar to a bottle aged Barolo) will evolve mixed with traditional characteristics as mentioned above.

Technical Information

Harvest Date: 21 April

Alcohol by Vol: 17.5%

Bottling Date: 19 June 2006

Oak Maturation:
No oak maturation

Glucose + Fructose: 97.3 g/L

Titrateable Acid: 6.1 g/L

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