



2006 d'Arenberg The Derelict Vineyard

100% McLaren Vale Grenache



Restoration of 'The Derelict Vineyard' and the quality of its premium fruit characterizes the faith the Osborn's have in Grenache and these old vineyards.

The Name

Some years ago, chief winemaker Chester Osborn, sought out additional super premium Grenache fruit from McLaren Vale to meet the high demand for d'Arenberg's Grenache-based wines. Many very old vineyards showed promise but had not been used for grape production for decades. Long bracken ferns and native grasses were taking over and the vines themselves resembled Medusa's hair - wild, struggling and gnarled. This was the inspiration in the naming of this wine. Taming and rejuvenation of these vineyards has patiently occurred over several years although some vines still look rather hard-done-by and only produce very low yields of exceptional quality.

The Vintage

Vintage 2006 started early and finished early. Overall quality was excellent for whites and reds and in particular, Grenache. Their flavours developed at lower than normal beaume giving complexity and depth to the flavour profile.

A dry winter followed by heavy rains in spring resulted in vines with healthy and balanced canopies on most soils. A mild, early summer leading into a warmer period during veraison stopped vegetative growth allowing vines to channel energy into the fruit. A cooler period that occurred after veraison was a slight concern as Grenache really requires warm conditions to fully develop its colour, concentrated flavour profile and richness. Luckily, the warmth returned in early March which instantly increased the Baumes without diluting the levels of natural acidity.

The Winemaking

The exceptionally low-yielding Grenache fruit was hand-picked late in vintage. After gentle crushing in the 'Demoisy' crusher, separate parcels were fermented in traditional headed-down open fermenters and foot-trodden with wader-clad feet.

Gentle pressing took place in our 19th century 'Coq' and 'Bromley & Tregoning' basket-presses with fermentation completed in barrels.

Maturation took place in the same one, two and three year old French and American oak barriques for 12 months before blending and bottling.

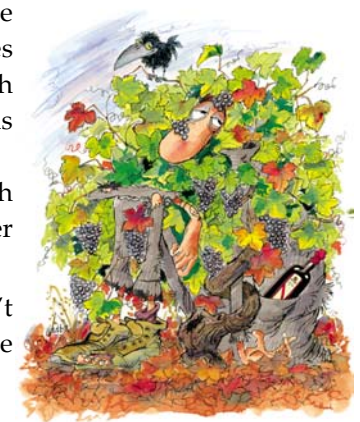
The Characteristics

On initial pouring, the colours of this wine are dark and concentrated and suggest a very young wine. Served blind, the fragrance and voluptuous, red fruit aromas lead you to think that it's more likely a brooding Kiwi pinot than McLaren Vale Grenache. However, as the aromas evolve, notes of roasted meats, liquorice, spices, white pepper & sweet paprika emerge. Combined with concentrated maraschino cherries & blueberry flavours and it soon becomes obvious that this is real Grenache, at its best.

The palate is rich and soft dominated by very pure, deep, exotic, spiced, red fruit and Turkish delight notes. This is followed by savoury edges of herbs, bitter chocolate and earthy/tarry leather flavours that are long, juicy and balanced with fine lacy acidity and ripe slippery tannins.

The richness of fruit, overall softness and very long finish is impressive and, for those who haven't really understood the complexities of Grenache, this wine could be quite captivating. Those Grenache converts will find this a real pleasure. Possibly the best we have crafted to date, we expect this will be a fascinating wine to taste and drink over the next 10 to 15 years ahead.

Artist George Haddon ©



Technical Information

Harvest Dates:

10 March to 26 April

Oak Maturation:

12 months in 2 - 4 year old French & American oak barriques

Alcohol by Vol: 15.0%

Glucose+Fructose: 0.4 g/L

Titrateable Acid: 6.7 g/L

pH: 3.46

Bottling Date:

13 April 2007

Chief Winemaker:

Chester d'Arenberg Osborn

Senior Winemakers:

Philip Dean & Jack Walton

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