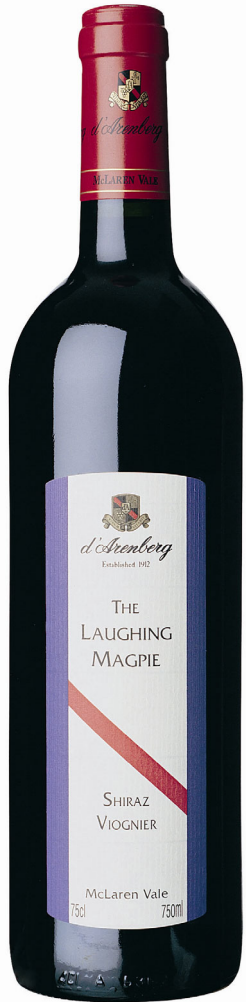




2004 d'Arenberg The Laughing Magpie

100% McLaren Vale Shiraz (94%) / Viognier (6%)

Towards the end of its fermentation the colour of this wine is almost purple in colour, hence the colour of the label.



The Name

The vineyards and bushland that surround the d'Arenberg winery are home to the unique native Australian bird, the Kookaburra, famous for its distinctive laughing call. Much to the amusement of the family, Chester Osborn's daughters, Alicia and Ruby, named their two wild pet Kookaburra's the "Laughing Magpies".

The Magpie plumage is black with a stripe of white feathers and bears no resemblance to its famous cousin, but to this day the name has stuck. The Osborn's thought the name was a good choice for McLaren Vale's first ever Shiraz Viognier blend combining the (black) Shiraz and its white partner, Viognier.

The Vintage

After excellent winter rains and then a warm wet spring the vineyards were set for a good start to vintage. Flowering was consistent, for the first time crop sizes looked more normal than previous years. We experienced the coldest January for 12 years followed by a warm to hot February and mild March which carried on into April to eventually become a very long Indian summer due to the mild autumn weather. These conditions were ideal for producing Shiraz of superb quality.

Fruit selection was kept to a select range of soil types and densities, where vineyards had purposely not been fertilized or was to a very minimal level. These vineyards maintained good levels of vigour and were able to produce enough leaves to ripen the fruit.

The Winemaking

Very concentrated ripe bunches of Shiraz and Viognier were gently crushed by the "Demoisy" open mouthed, rubber toothed crusher, then co-fermented together in traditional, headed down open fermenters where the traditional foot-treading in wader-clad feet takes place. After about 2 weeks the must (the still fermenting juice) was then gently basket pressed by our 19th Century "Coq" and "Bromley & Tregoning" presses, and then transferred into American and French oak barriques for maturation.

The Characteristics

A youthful deep, complex wine that typifies this wonderful vintage. The Viognier adds a level of fragrance and spice such as flower blossom, ginger, honeysuckle and stone fruit characters that juices up the boldness of Shiraz and lengthens the vibrant mineral, fruity, flowery tannins.

The aroma continually evolves with intriguing, earthy characters of roast meat, game and salami appearing due to the portion of the wine that underwent a natural fermentation (no yeast added)

The palate is soft and juicy and is dominated by a mix of black fruits, blueberry and liquorice. There is a delightful dried herb green edge amongst a framework of fine acidity and ripe gritty tannins. The finish is soft, very elegant, long and pointed, featuring flavours of juicy red Satsuma plums and fine roasted black teas.

This wine is very appealing on release but will also benefit from further time. With age, the fruit characters will become more intense and as the ripe flavour spectrum of Shiraz with its blackberry, blueberry and boysenberry will be extremely interesting over the next 10 years or more.



Artist Steve Panozzo ©

Technical Information

Harvest Dates:

March – April

Oak Maturation

12 mths in US and French oak barriques

Alcohol by Vol: 14.5%

Residual Sugar: 0.9g/L

Titrateable Acid: 7.0g/L

pH: 3.45

Bottling Date:

8 April 2005

Chief Winemaker

Chester d'Arenberg Osborn

Senior Winemaker

Phillip Dean

d'ARENBERG PTY LTD

PO Box 195 Osborn Rd

McLAREN VALE

South Australia 5171

TELEPHONE +61 8 8323 8206

FACSIMILE +61 8 8323 8423

winery@darenberg.com.au

www.darenberg.com.au