



2006 d'Arenberg The Laughing Magpie

100% McLaren Vale Shiraz (90%) / Viognier (10%)

Towards the end of its fermentation the colour of this wine is a wonderfully vivid purple, 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 Kookaburras 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 and for it being such a cheerful wine (with colour & life) it resembles this cheeky native bird.

The Vintage

2006 vintage is regarded as one of our greatest vintages ever, which started early and finished early. Shiraz, a vintage highlight, displayed developed flavours at lower than normal Baume which was impressive.

A dry winter followed by heavy rains in spring resulted in vines with healthy, 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. The cooler conditions following veraison were ideal for whites such as Viognier. Days of warmer conditions saw a rapid jump in Baume in the red varieties which became very fragrant with wonderful levels of natural acidity and intensity of flavour. Later reds have more liquorice characteristics, and are bigger and gutsier.

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

Very dark saturated appearance and a violet-crimson hue suggesting a complex dry red.

The aroma is very intense with mix of dark Maraschino cherries, spiced fruit skins and obvious notes of apricot stones, crushed ginger and mandarin peel. As the wine opens up further notes of black roasted teas, black olive and smoky tarry notes evolve with a fragrant lift of violets and lilies. The palate is full flavoured with ripe, juicy, soft, mouth-filling, fruit flavours with notes of cranberries, blueberries, blackcurrants, cherries and dark chocolate/carob. The herbaceous edges keep the palate in check.

Overall balance is excellent with the oak suppressed by dark fruit while the floral tea-like tannins are abundant and silky acidity gives the wine great definition. The finish is long, juicy and pointed with blackcurrant and jube flavours and a mineral note pushing through.

The concentration and life of this wine suggests it will greatly benefit with further bottle aging for 10 years or more.

Technical Information

Harvest Dates:
2 February to 2nd April

Oak Maturation
12 mths in US and French oak barriques

Alcohol by Vol: 14.5%
Glucose & Fructose: 0.8g/L
Titrateable Acid: 6.7 g/L
pH: 3.50

Bottling Date:
From 2nd April 2007
Chief Winemaker
Chester d'Arenberg Osborn
Senior Winemakers
Phillip Dean/ Jack Walton



Artist Steve Panozzo ©

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