



2008 d'Arenberg The Laughing Magpie

McLaren Vale - Shiraz (94%), Viognier (6%)

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 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 two wild Kookaburras who regularly visited their house 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

2008 is a tale of two vintages for red wines in McLaren Vale. Winter rain ensured the soil reached filled capacity and set the vines up perfectly with healthy balanced canopies.

A normal spring and an unseasonably cool January and February meant most vines remained stress free and for early picked parcels flavour ripeness was achieved at reasonably low sugar levels and high natural acidity. However, a sustained heat wave in early March forced frantic picking and resulted in rich ripe characters.

The Laughing Magpie is a blend of both the early and late picked parcels and accordingly is balanced with the ripe characters well in check.

The Winemaking

Walking the vineyard rows and tasting grapes, Chester Osborn classifies and determines the ideal picking time for each individual vineyard.

Small batches are crushed in the Demoisy open-mouthed, rubber toothed crusher and transferred to five tonne headed-down open fermenters where the Viognier and Shiraz are co-fermented.

When tannin extraction is just right the wine is basket pressed and transferred to a mixture of new and old French and old American oak barriques to complete primary and secondary fermentation. The barrel fermented component is aged on lees to slow aging and keep the wine fresher while also reducing the oak influence. There is no racking until final blending.

Chester and the winemaking team undertake an extensive barrel tasting process to determine the final blend. The Laughing Magpie does not undertake fining or filtration prior to bottling.



The Characteristics as Tasted June 2010

As well as varietal dark fruits and spice, the nose features savoury characters of cooked meats, spices and cracked black pepper.

The palate is robust and concentrated with great intensity. The fruit is more expressive on the palate with a touch of raspberry, plum, blackcurrant and blueberry with underlying spice and just a hint of savoury oak.

The mineral silky tannins build nicely on the palate and provide good structure and impressive length. This wine will benefit from bottle age and if cellared correctly will drink well over the next 15 years.

Technical Information

Harvest Dates:

19 February to 29 March

Oak Maturation:

10 months in new and older French and American Barriques

Alcohol by Volume: 14.5%

Titrateable Acid: 6.6g/L

pH: 3.45

Additional Info:

Vegan friendly

Bottling Date

17 March 2009

Chief Winemaker:

Chester d'Arenberg Osborn

Senior Winemaker:

Jack Walton



Artist Steve Panozzo ©

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