



2005 d'Arenberg The Ironstone Pressings

100% McLaren Vale Grenache (70%) Shiraz (25%) Mourvedre (5%)

d'Arenberg's love affair with Grenache reaches its pinnacle with The Ironstone Pressings. The original block planted in 1918, on the lower side of the winery, has a plentiful amount of ironstone throughout the soil structures, which enhances the body and tannin structure of the wine.

The Name

Most of McLaren Vale's acclaimed and historic vineyard land is impregnated with ancient, decomposed laterite granite known as "Ironstone". Its extraordinary rusty red-brown colour is derived from the iron oxides present in the stone. The larger pieces were cleared from the vineyards in the late 1880s and utilized in many of the buildings at d'Arenberg.

The Vineyards

Many of the old vine vineyards are grown on an array of soils from deep sand over clay, loam over limestone, classic terra rossa, and red shallow clays to hard rock and shale based soils. The complex variation of the soils influences the ripening of the fruit to a point where we pick individual parts of the vineyard at different times to maximise flavour profile.

The Vintage

Vintage 2005 could be summarised as a vintage that ripened without interruptions. It was early, it was late. After a slightly dry winter, spring rains in November sent vines booming and set up a quick condensed flowering and set with good berry numbers. Summer was cool with intermitted rains throughout December and January on a fortnightly basis which made for a mild but steady lead up to harvest without interrupting veraison. Vigour was nominal due to only moderate reserves of soil moisture from a relatively dry winter which restricted shoot length. With the onset of autumn we experienced a burst of warm to hot, dry weather with above average day and night time temperatures throughout autumn.

The resulting wines are very tight wines, with very good red fruit fragrance and lovely acidity. Crops were above average although slightly under 2004.

The Winemaking

Each batch of fruit received was gently crushed in our Demoisy open-mouthed, rubber-toothed crusher so as many of the berries as possible remained whole. They were then transferred to open fermenters where the must of seeds and skins were permanently submerged beneath the free run juice. The must received no plunging or pumping over while fermentation occurred. Halfway through the primary fermentation, traditional foot-treading and basket pressing occurs when the desired tannin levels are reached. The combined free run and pressing components were then transferred to barrel to complete primary and malolactic fermentation. The objective of blending is to select only the barrels from the best batches. As the finished wine is a blend of three varieties it is a matter of selecting and screening the very best Grenache barrels. They complement the Dead Arm Shiraz components which likewise complements the 28 Rd Mourvèdre components to a point where the Grenache is beautifully framed.

The Characteristics

Dark saturated colours- almost black with edges of garnet red-toned hues suggesting a full-bodied red.

The initial aromas are quite compress and suggest savoury red fruits, moss, forest floor and spices. As it breathes more obvious notes of loganberries, cranberry, mulberry, bell peppers and homemade tomato sauce notes with liquorice, dark chocolate and black currant leaf notes with a background of pepper, dried fruit mix and fine grain oak.

The palate is immense and beautifully structured with layers of red fruits and exotic notes of spice, peppers and red-fleshed cherries, dark plum, blueberries and boysenberries. Mixed with this is exotic flower notes of saffron, jasmine, and white spices mixed with an herbaceous, mineral/earthy element and freshly cut flower stems which adds to the complexity. Let it sit decanter and a continuous stream of characters evolve with layers of flavours balanced with a frame work of gritty tannins and subtle acidity.

Cellaring Potential

Once again the firmness of the finish and its savoury herbal flowery iodine notes is characteristic of mourvèdre but this year the level of loganberry and red fruits just add another level. With time the wine will become more and more integrated to produce a rich, complex flavoured spicy violet dark chocolate with edges of black olive, ginger and dried herbs balanced with fine piquant tannins and acidity.

Technical Information

Harvest Dates:

25 February to 28 April

Oak Maturation:

12 months in new to 5 year old

French and American oak barriques

Alcohol by Vol:

15.0%

Glucose + Fructose:

0.5 g/L

Titrateable Acidity:

6.4g/L

pH:

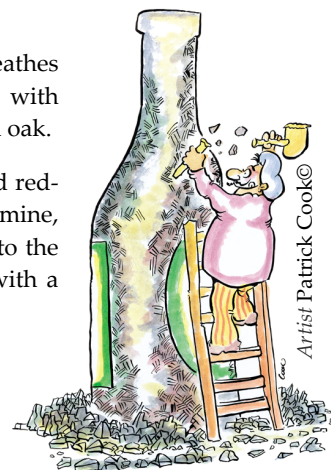
3.45

Bottled:

31 May 2006

Chief Winemaker:

Chester d'Arenberg Osborn



Artist Patrick Cook©

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