



2007 d'Arenberg The Ironstone Pressings

Grenache (70%) Shiraz (25%) Mourvèdre (5%)

McLaren Vale



The Name

Most of McLaren Vale's acclaimed and historic vineyards are 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 1880's and utilised in many of the buildings at d'Arenberg, most notably the old stables.

The Vintage

Due to drought conditions not seen for decades, 2007 was the earliest start to vintage in McLaren Vale. Overall winter rainfalls were a third of what is considered normal. The dry conditions and cold spring temperatures leading up to the growing season affected the vines fruiting and canopy development, with very short shoot length. This resulted in reduced bunch and berry size and ensured high tannins.

Just as vintage was to commence McLaren Vale experienced 50mm of rain, which caused some problems with fruit splitting but essentially saved the vintage. The rain provided enough ground moisture in the final stages for the fruit to ripen in a stress free state. This resulted in grapes having concentrated flavours at lower levels of beaume ripeness with excellent levels of acidity.

Yields were down approximately fifty percent for most of the premium dry grown bush vine vineyards that contribute to The Ironstone Pressings. This reduced yield is a contributing factor to the concentration of flavours and great tannin structure seen in 2007. Both factors that will aid in the longevity of this wine.

Cellaring Potential

The Grenache tannins evident in the wine's youth will drop off after approximately five years, at which time the Mourvèdre tannins will take over. With time the wine will become more integrated to produce a rich, complex wine flavoured with spices, violets and dark chocolate with edges of black olive and dried herbs balanced with fine tannins and acidity. If cellared in the right condition this wine will drink well until 2027 providing immense interest on the journey.

The Winemaking

Walking the dry grown bush vines 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 then transferred to five-tonne headed-down open fermenters. These batches remain separate until final blending.

Foot treading is undertaken on selected parcels two thirds of the way through fermentation. When tannin extraction is just right the wine is basket pressed and transferred to a mixture of new and used French and old American oak barriques to complete primary and secondary fermentation. The barrel ferments are aged on lees to keep the wine fresh 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 Ironstone Pressings does not undertake fining or filtration prior to bottling.

Tasting Notes

The nose is juicy with fresh plum, blackberry and raspberry entwined with nutmeg and cinnamon spices and a floral lift. There is a touch of licorice and a hint of white pepper adding complexity.

The palate has wonderful structure with elegant chalky tannins through the mid palate and long fine gritty mineral tannins providing a refined finish. The palate is nicely layered and although the fruit is quite closed in youth, the soil characters are clearly evident with savoury dried herbs balancing the fruit sweetness and spices of the varietal Grenache flavours.

This is a very graceful wine with soulful charm and a sophisticated and precise structure that will only reward those with the patience to cellar it for up to 20 years.

Technical Information

Harvest Dates: 20 Feb to 12 April	Alcohol by Volume: 14.5%	Bottling Date 31 March 2008
Oak Maturation: 10 months in 2– 5 year old French and American Oak barriques	Titrateable Acid: 7.1 pH: 3.38 Additional Info: Vegan friendly	Chief Winemaker: Chester d'Arenberg Osborn Senior Winemaker: Jack Walton



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