



2005 d'Arenberg The Custodian

100% McLaren Vale Grenache



During the 1980's, d'Arenberg resisted taking part in a Grenache vine pull scheme that proved to be short-sighted. Their faith in the old vines has proved rewarding, with d'Arenberg receiving the mantle as 'Custodian' of the Grenache variety. Today we share this recognition with our growers who have preserved old plots of bush vines.

The Name

In 1959 Francis d'Arenberg (d'Arry) Osborn began bottling d'Arenberg wines under the now famous Red Stripe label and today d'Arenberg is the keeper of nearly a 1/3rd of all of McLaren Vales old Grenache bush vines. d'Arry has now celebrated 65 consecutive vintages, with consistent critical acclaim and scores of Australian and international wine show trophies and gold medals awarded to d'Arenberg's coveted Grenache-based wines.

The Vintage

A vintage summarised as a vintage that ripened without interruptions and produced moderate yields. Low to moderate winter rain with good following rains in November enabled adequate moisture to support the potential crop load and allow it to ripen well over summer. The summer was cool and dry followed by an unusually dry, warm autumn.

Due to the varying soil types and structures and the many individual meso-climates of our Grenache vineyards fruit selection was kept to a select range of soil types and densities. These vineyards maintained good levels of vigour while supporting an adequate level of green leaves in the canopy right through to harvest. The harvested fruit had excellent levels of fragrance and varying flavour profiles balanced with ripe long gritty tannins.

The Winemaking

It is fitting that the family's fourth generation winemaker, Chester, has guided the finest small-batch Grenache parcels from the 2004 vintage through the gentle 'Demoisy' crusher, open fermenters (where the traditional foot-treading in wader-clad feet takes place) and then into 19th century 'Coq' and 'Bromley & Tregoning' basket-presses. The Osborn family will continue to work well with Grenache for many more generations. Natural minimal processing ensures maximum flavour which results in a harmless deposit in, and adhering, to the bottle. This wine will benefit from extended bottle ageing and decanting.

The Characteristics

The appearance is vibrant with red cherry centre and looks fabulous. Upon pouring, fragrant Grenache notes of violets, ripe red-fruit jams, spice, strawberry, cranberry and mulberry characters with flowery, earthy, liquorice, pot-pouri notes developing as the wine opens up.

The palate is medium bodied, fleshy with a concentrated array of red berries, dark sweet plums, strawberries and spicy softness. Fruit sweetness takes hold midway through the palate and then explodes with fruit flavours and lively, ripe, gritty, fragrant tannins that linger on past the finish of the wine. Presently the wine is not as big as some previous years due to the cooler growing season but it's clearly one of the more refined and elegant Custodians made for some time.

The wine is perfectly balanced between fruit weight, level of concentration, tannins and acidity as your mouth quickly salivates for a second helping. That's Grenache for you.



Technical Information

Harvest Dates

25 March to 29 April

Oak Maturation

Av. of 12 mths in new & aged American & French oak barriques & large cask

Alcohol by Vol: 14.5%

Glucose + Fructose: 0.5 g/L

Titrateable Acid: 6.6g/L

pH: 3.45

Bottled:

10th June 2006

Chief Winemaker

Chester d'Arenberg Osborn

Senior Winemakers

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