



2005 d'Arenberg The Hermit Crab

100% McLaren Vale Viognier (70%) Marsanne (30%)

This wine comes about from the understanding that Grenache, Shiraz, and Mourvedre do extremely well in McLaren Vale, and therefore the Rhone Valley white partners Marsanne, Viognier and Roussanne should also perform well in the area.



The Name

The close proximity of the vineyards to the Gulf St. Vincent induces a beneficial cooling effect on the grapes. Many of McLaren Vale's vineyards are on free-draining soils underlain with limestone, formed by the calcareous remains of the local marine fauna. One such creature was the Hermit Crab, a reclusive little crustacean that to this day inhabits the cast-off shells of others. The Osborn family thought the name appropriate for this, McLaren Vale's first ever Marsanne Viognier blend and the fact that "Hermit" is an abbreviation for the name of the region in France where the Marsanne grape variety dominates.

The Vintage

Winter rains appeared to be quite adequate, however with the dry September/October; vine vigour was starting to wane. A wet November sent vines booming and set up a quick condensed flowering and set. This negated the requirements for irrigation through flowering. Set generally secured good levels of berry numbers and the consistent rainfall on a perfectly timed fortnight basis through December and January made for a mild but steady lead up to harvest. Veraison seemed early to on time. Fortunately the rains combined with only moderate reserves of soil moisture didn't produce excessive vigour.

The Winemaking

The grapes, once crushed were settled in tank before being basket pressed which ensures the gentle extraction of these varieties delicate fruit characters. The Marsanne is fermentation in tank to retain its more herbaceous and nutty characters while the Viognier is fermented in both tank and barriques to enable a wide spectrum of tropical and stone fruits characters.

The Characteristics

A very expressive dry white, with aromas that suggest some cooler climate characters when compared to previous years. Fresh lifted aromas of rose petals, apricot juice, with a dry herb flowery note coming through, and then finally a lovely green kernel character appears.

The palate is generous and quite rich, but straight away the fruit characters are quite tight and controlled. There lots of interesting flavours from the cool flavour spectrum of cold, wet, river pebbles to a slight green almond to a lovely expressive ripe figs and apricot stones. The finish is quite long and focused with an unusual nettle character appearing that's reminiscent of Sauvignon Blanc that pushes out amongst the mix of ripe fruits, minerals and dried herbs. Its one of those wines that as you drink it you have an overwhelming feeling this wine is just poised to take you somewhere interesting.



Artist: Eric Lobbeke

Technical Information

Harvest Dates
2 March – 31 March

Oak Maturation
4% in 5 yr old and older
French Oak Barriques

Alcohol by Vol: 14.5%

Residual Sugar: 1.6 g/L

Titrateable Acid: 5.7 g/L

pH: 3.48

Bottling: From 23 January 2006

Chief Winemaker:
Chester d'Arenberg Osborn

Additional Information
Vegetarian/ Vegan friendly

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