



2009 d'Arenberg The Custodian Grenache

McLaren Vale

The very first wine to display the famous red stripe contained 50% Grenache and it has been a variety central to d'Arenberg ever since.



The Name

During the vine pull scheme of the early 1980's d'Arry Osborn refused to touch his old Grenache vineyards. When his son Chester started in the business as Chief Winemaker in 1984 he set about acquiring more old vine Grenache grapes and vineyards at a time when it was considered un-fashionable. Today d'Arenberg is the keeper of nearly one third of McLaren Vale's old bush vine Grenache and has earned the title of 'Custodian' of the variety.

The Vintage

Sufficient winter rains set up the vines with good canopies. December and most of January were very cool with only three days above 30°C until late in the month.

There was a string of days above 40°C in late January when Grenache vines were going through veraison and therefore had no negative impact.

The mild weather that followed ensured that ripening was stress free and grapes showed good levels of natural acidity and balanced tannins.

Grenache was clearly the stand out variety of 2009 showing pure fruit characters and very classy tannin structure.

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 then transferred to five tonne headed-down open fermenters. These batches remain separate until final blending.

Foot treading is undertaken 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 old French and old American oak barriques and large casks. Here it completes primary and secondary fermentation. The barrel fermented components are matured 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 Custodian does not undertake fining or filtration prior to bottling.

The Characteristics

The nose is full of berries with clear notes raspberry and blueberry with cherry and plum adding to the mix. With a few swirls the wine opens further to reveal earth and spice notes.

Vibrant and fresh red fruits form a beautiful, luscious fruit core with white pepper and cinnamon spices emerging on the back palate. There is an earthy feel to the wine with grippy, mineral fruit tannins providing a long finish.

The vintage is clearly reflected in the wine with ripe fruit characters well balanced with earth notes and layered secondary characters. The wine has the poise and structure to cellar well over the next decade.

Technical Information

Harvest Dates:

27 Feb to 9 April

Oak Maturation:

9 months in older

French and American Oak and large casks

Alcohol by Volume: 14.5%

Titrateable Acid: 7.0 g/L

pH: 3.32

Additional Info:

Vegan friendly

Residual Sugar

2.9 g/L

Chief Winemaker:

Chester d'Arenberg Osborn

Senior Winemaker:

Jack Walton



Artist Tom Jellet ©

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