

THE LAUGHING MAGPIE

Shiraz Vionier 2013

McLaren Vale, Shiraz (94%) Viognier (6%)



The Name

The Kookaburra is a native Australian bird famous for its distinctive laughing call, Chester's young daughters named them 'Laughing Magpies'. The Magpie plumage is black with a stripe of white feathers, representing McLaren Vale's first ever blend combining the (black) Shiraz and its white partner, Viognier.

The Vintage

Great winter rains set the vines up well last year, followed by a very dry spring and summer with no heatwaves. The initial fruit development was fantastic, the first white grapes to be picked showed incredible levels of natural acidity coupled with good fruit ripeness unlike anything we've seen for a long time.

Just prior to picking the first red grapes there was three days of reasonably high temperatures, which accelerated sugar ripening and meant the winery was filled in record time. A lot of the red grapes from that period are particularly rich with intense tannin and dark fruit characters - a great vintage for reds and whites alike.

The Winemaking

Small batches of grapes are gently crushed and then transferred to open fermenters, where the Viognier and Shiraz are co-fermented. Foot treading is undertaken two thirds of the way through fermentation, the wine is basket pressed and transferred to a mixture of old French and American oak to complete fermentation and mature. The barrel ferments are aged on lees, there is no racking until final blending and no fining or filtration.

The Characteristics

Wine is unrivalled in the world of beverages for the influence time and season have on its ever changing personality. The 2013 Laughing Magpie has just now reinforced that lesson for me. Upon tasting this wine in early Summer 2017 it was bursting at the seams with typical young, fruity Shiraz characters, think plum, mulberry, milk chocolate and sweet liquorice. The tannin and acid profile at the time however, sat a bit awkwardly against the juiciness of the wine. Now, as the colder months have set in I notice those sweet fruited scents slowly retreating and a darker, more savoury aspect to this wine revealing itself.

Mulberry and plum give way to black olive, cedar and cinnamon; milk chocolate has evolved into dark chocolate, the serious type with lots of cocoa; and the sweet confectionary liquorice appears more like slightly salty Dutch liquorice. The tannins have taken on a chalky edge and the mouthfeel, whilst densely packed, feels much more streamlined. From experience and taking into account the concentration of this wine, I expect the sweetness to re-emerge in the coming months. Plums and mulberries will continue to please but add to that sun dried figs and boysenberry pie. And watch the texture evolve as the wine becomes ever more velvety. A Shiraz Viognier that will suit everyone from the most avid wine connoisseur seeking a thought provoking experience through to someone who just wants to enjoy a quality red wine with their barbecued steak.



Alcohol	14.6%	Residual sugar	1.2
Titrateable acid	7.3	pH	3.49
Oak maturation	Up to 10 months	Chief Winemaker	Chester Osborn
Senior Winemaker	Jack Walton		