



2006 d'Arenberg The Ironstone Pressings

100% McLaren Vale Grenache (70%) Shiraz (25%) Mourvedre (5%)

d'Arenberg's love affair with Grenache reaches its pinnacle with The Ironstone Pressings. The original block planted in 1918, on the lower side of the winery, has a plentiful amount of ironstone throughout the soil structures which enhances the body and tannin structure of the wine.



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 1880s and utilised in many of the buildings at d'Arenberg.

The Vineyards

Many of the old vine vineyards are grown on an array of soils. From deep sand over clay, loam over limestone, classic terra rossa, and red shallow clays to hard rock and shale based soils. The complex variation of the soils influences the ripening of the fruit to a point where we pick individual parts of the vineyard at different times to maximise flavour profile.

The Vintage

The lead up to vintage was uneventful with average winter rain followed by heavy rains in spring that resulted in vines with healthy, balanced canopies on most soils. A mild, early, summer leading into a warmer period during veraison stopped vegetative growth allowing vines to channel energy into the fruit. A prolonged cool period occurred after veraison in February with some rain which enabled the fruit to ripen without any stress. The warmth returned in March with cool evening temperatures to complete ripening in almost perfect conditions enhancing fruit flavour and richness without diluting levels of natural acidity. Picking was staggered with many parcels picked in wonderful, still, cool, autumn conditions.

The Winemaking

Each batch of fruit received was gently crushed in our Demoisy open-mouthed, rubber-toothed crusher so as many of the berries as possible remained whole. They were then transferred to open fermenters where the must of seeds and skins were permanently submerged beneath the free run juice. The must received no plunging or pumping over while fermentation occurred. Halfway through the primary fermentation, traditional foot-treading and basket pressing occurs when the desired tannin levels are reached. The combined free run and pressing components were then transferred to barrel to complete primary and malolactic fermentation. The objective of blending is to select only the barrels from the best batches. As the finished wine is a blend of three varieties it is a matter of selecting and screening the very best Grenache barrels. They complement the Dead Arm Shiraz components which likewise complements the 28 Rd Mourvèdre components to a point where the Grenache is beautifully framed.

The Characteristics

The appearance of this wine is brilliant; it really glistens in the glass when poured. A very deep, concentrated red with a very dark centre and edges of red-toned hues suggesting a full-bodied oak matured wine. The initial aromas are dominated with fragrant red fruits over spices and liquorice/earthy notes. As it breathes more obvious notes of loganberries, cranberry and mulberry fruits with maraschino cherry, dark chocolate and intense plum notes. There is an impressive background of fine-grain, cedary oak notes.

The palate is immense and beautifully structured with complex layers of exotic fruit flavours mixed with silky fine acidity. The mineral edged tannins are superb, almost elegant. Ripe red-fleshed cherries and dark ripe plums, spice and bell peppers are mixed with summer flowers. Dried herbs such as jasmine and lavender linger on and on; the finish has excellent intensity. Let it sit in a decanter and a continuous stream of characters will evolve.

Cellaring Potential

2006 was an excellent vintage for this wine. Late ripening varieties such as Grenache and Mourvèdre are dominated with intense fresh fruit characters and great length of flavour. This with the fine firmness of the finish and its savoury herbal flowery iodine notes characteristic of Mourvèdre suggest to us that extended ageing is quite possible in appropriate conditions. 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, ginger and dried herbs balanced with fine piquant tannins and acidity.

Technical Information

Harvest Dates:

7 March to 26 April

Oak Maturation:

12 months in new to 5 year old

French and American oak barriques

Alcohol by Vol:

14.5%

Glucose + Fructose:

0.3 g/L

Titrateable Acidity:

6.5g/L

pH:

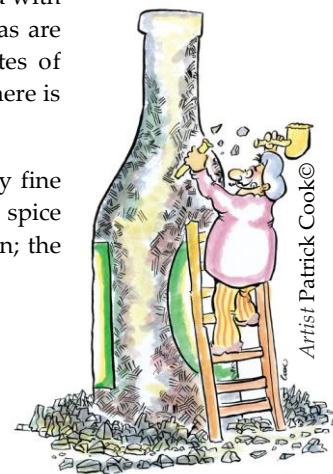
3.45

Bottled:

19 April 2007

Chief Winemaker:

Chester d'Arenberg Osborn



Artist Patrick Cook©

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