



1996 d'Arenberg The Ironstone Pressings

65% Grenache, 35 % Shiraz

McLaren Vale and Fleurieu Peninsula

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 Vintage

The 1996 vintage enjoyed a relatively mild growing season, which allowed for an extended ripening period. Typically for the region there was little rainfall throughout the summer, with vines relying on subsoil moisture from the winter rains.

A slightly late harvest consisted of small berries, which produced structured wines with particularly intense fruit flavours; definitely wines with outstanding cellaring potential.

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 near the end of fermentation followed by gentle basket pressing. The wine is then transferred to a mixture of new and old French and old American oak to complete primary and secondary fermentation.



The Characteristics

In its youth, d'Arenberg's Ironstone Pressings has a deep, dark plum purple colour matched by just as intense black cherry, dark chocolate, liquorice, tobacco, mixed spice and brooding ripe blackberry aromas. Mulberry, ripe plum and fresh pepper spice dominate the rich full bodied palate before a long, intense, rolling, dark bitter cherry tannin finish.

After quite some time in bottle the intense colour fruit aromas and dusty gripping tannins tone down, the colour moving towards brown ruby red. Eventually the Grenache and Shiraz blossom as rich, sweet, violet like scents, with spicy, cedary and tobacco based aromas before malty sweet dark chocolate flavours and crunchy, chewy textured black olive, spicy ginger and long fleshy textures. The hallmark of vigorous, fine piquant tannin and acidity continue to reside with The Ironstone Pressings after quite some considerable time, has have previous vintage since the late 1950's.

Technical Information

Harvest Dates:

10 March to 2 May

Oak Maturation:

12 months in new and older French and American barriques

Alcohol by Volume: 15%

Titrateable Acid: 6.3 g/L

pH: 3.42

Bottling Date

21 December 1997

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