



2002 d'Arenberg The Ironstone Pressings

Grenache (70%)/ Shiraz (25%)/ Mourvedre (5%)

Most of McLaren Vale's acclaimed and historic vineyard land is impregnated with ancient, decomposed laterite granite known as "Ironstone".

The Name

Most of McLaren Vale's acclaimed and historic vineyard land is impregnated with ancient, decomposed laterite granite known as "Ironstone". Its extraordinary rusty red-brown color is derived from the iron oxides present in the stone. The larger pieces were cleared from the vineyard late last century and utilized in many of the buildings at d'Arenberg and in the district. It is indeed fitting that "Ironstone" is the first name given to this old Osborn family favorite as it helps, both above and below ground, to produce our traditional pressings wine.

The Vintage

The 2002 season was characterised by a cold, wet winter and spring, which produced lower yields with good, thick-skinned berries. The cool and dry summer ripened fruit gradually and a warm, dry autumn allowed the grapes to ripen fully, producing some of the best and most exotic characters seen for many years.

The Winemaking

As the vines are low-yielding, producing small berries with concentrated fruit and tannins small parcels of Grenache, Shiraz and Mourvedre were picked by hand late in vintage. After gentle crushing in the 'Demoisy' crusher, separate parcels were fermented in traditional headed-down open fermenters and foot trod in wader-clad feet. Gentle pressing followed in the 19th century 'Coq' and 'Bromley & Tregoning' basket presses. Maturation took place in mostly new American and French oak for 10 months prior to bottling. This wine will benefit from further cellaring and decanting. Natural minimal processing ensures maximum flavour, which results in a harmless deposit in, and adhering to the bottle.

The Characteristics

In its youth, d'Arenberg's 'Ironstone Pressings' is almost black, unusual for such a blend. Upon release, this vintage is extraordinarily fragrant but also very tight. Violets and other flowers dominate at this stage, but become more complex with a wide array of spices and emerging plums, dark cherries, cranberries and blackberries. As with previous vintages of this wine, the extreme terroir shows through due to the extraordinarily low grape yield; characters of earth, stones and dried plant material feature. With time the full spice, strawberry and liquorice and blackcurrants will develop with fresh pepper tails; at this stage, it is a mean monster with fragrant, gritty, fruit tannins that go on forever. Eventually, the Grenache and Shiraz blossom as rich, sweet, violet-like scents, with spicy based aroma, before malty, sweet, dark chocolate flavours and crunchy, chewy textured black olive, spicy ginger and long fleshy textures. The Mourvedre adds dried herbs and iodine characters that are very persistent, matched with slightly chalky tannins. The hallmark of vigorous, fine piquant tannin and acidity continue to reside with 'The Ironstone Pressings' after some considerable time, as have previous vintages since the late 1950's.

Technical Information

Harvest Dates

6 Mar – 17 Apr 2002

Oak Maturation

Average of 10 mths in new, 1, 2 & 3y.o USA & French oak barriques

Residual Sugar

0.6 g/L

Alcohol by Vol

14.5% alc/ vol

Chief Winemaker

Chester d'Arenberg Osborn

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