

ST HENRI

SHIRAZ 2019



St Henri is a time-honoured and alternative expression of shiraz, and an intriguing counterpoint to Grange. It is unusual amongst high quality Australian red wines as it does not rely on any new oak. Released for the first time by Penfolds in the early 1950s (first commercial vintage 1957), it gained a new lease of life in the 1990s as its quality and distinctive style became better understood. Proudly, a wine style that hasn't succumbed to the dictates of fashion or commerce. St Henri is rich and plush when young, gaining soft, earthy, mocha-like characters with age. It is matured in an assortment of old large vats that allow the wine to develop, imparting minimal, if any oak character. Although a small proportion of cabernet may sneak into the blend, the focal point for St Henri remains shiraz.

GRAPE VARIETY

Shiraz

VINEYARD REGION

McLaren Vale, Barossa Valley, Padthaway, Wrattenbully, The Peninsulas

WINE ANALYSIS

Alc/Vol: 14.5%, Acidity: 6.6 g/L, pH: 3.62

MATURATION

12 months in large seasoned oak vats

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

McLaren Vale and Barossa Valley recorded well below long-term average winter rainfall, while the vineyards in the South-East growing districts enjoyed above-average winter rainfall. September temperatures were cool with little rainfall, resulting in some isolated frost events. Summer was generally hot, with high temperatures delaying veraison. The Barossa Valley experienced 31 days of temperatures exceeding 35°C while McLaren Vale experienced 25 days (December to March). Irrigation was crucial to keep vines in good health. The proximity of the Southern Ocean played an important role in moderating temperatures in Wrattenbully and Padthaway, allowing for a high-quality harvest, albeit with smaller yields than average. Although yields were down in all regions, the quality was outstanding with shiraz showing excellent colours, firm tannin profiles and intense flavours.

COLOUR

Plum red with a crimson rim

NOSE

Such promise! The first impression is unabashedly St Henri.

A charming shiraz, always an outlier among its peers. Here you will find no new oak influence, none required, the very essence of shiraz gently matured in large, seasoned vats.

Close examination calls for a wine glass of generous proportions.

Swirl, allow the aromatics to emerge slowly, gently.

The dark fruits are first to show their credentials... blackberries and mulberries generously adorned with fresh whipped cream.

The crunchier red fruits appear next, pomegranate and cranberry. Exotic, enticing. There is a suggestion of mild paprika. A hint of liquorice, toasted fennel seed, dried mint. Meaty aromas, Greek lamb rubbed with olive oil, oregano and sea salt twirling on the rotisserie. From the charcutier, savoury bresaola and prosciutto. Burnished vintage leather.

PALATE

Structural descriptors don't usually lead the charge for St Henri, but they are certainly faithful to the 2019 vintage.

A fine graphite core. The warmth and creaminess of Mexican sauce with the weight of wild game: venison loin, braised hare.

Eventually sweet custard flavours emerge, smooth and textural. Portuguese tart!

A suggestion of fine salinity aligns with mouth-watering acidity, cleansing.

As always with St Henri, restrained, no need to be showy.

The dark cocoa tannins are so fine they could be spun from silk.

Will age and evolve beautifully for decades.

PEAK DRINKING

2024 - 2045

LAST TASTED

May 2022