

ST HENRI

SHIRAZ 2021

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

Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale

WINE ANALYSIS

Alc/Vol: 14.5%, Acidity: 6.7 g/L, pH: 3.72

MATURATION

12 months in large seasoned oak vats

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

Barossa Valley winter rainfall was 20% shy of the long-term average, with a particularly arid July. An unexpectedly wet August replenished soil moisture just in time for the growing season. Spring months gifted us with temperatures slightly above average, creating superb conditions for budburst and flowering. Summer heat was present but not punishing, with 21 days recording temperatures above 35°C. Despite early February showers, La Niña's anticipated effects were largely absent, allowing for a smooth and methodical harvest period in which the Shiraz grapes showcased their distinctive character. In McLaren Vale, the vines enjoyed a temperate year as well. Following a dry July, spring rains arrived to balance out conditions leading up to budburst and flowering — a period blessed with warmth. The summer heat was even more forgiving here than it was in Barossa Valley; only nine days saw mercury rising above 35°C. January held close to average temperatures while February and March were marked by particularly mild weather. This led to a later veraison and thus extended ripening that pushed harvest into March.

COLOUR

Dark, dense, black core and purple around the rim.

NOSE

With a delicate swirl emerge wafts of raspberry liquorice entwined with white chocolate. Freshly ground nutmeg and toasted fennel seeds interlace with spiced apple pie. Savoury undertones of artisanal pastrami paired with fresh bagels create a canvas that is both complex and harmonious.

PALATE

A duo of wild cherry and pomegranate fruits accompanied by hints of golden custard tarts and toasted sourdough, imparting additional layers of complexity and allure. Ironstone minerality asserts itself, guiding the palate towards a refined savouriness while instilling a sense of mouthwatering tension within each sip. The tannins are masterfully integrated; they are tightly knit yet exude a velvety texture that promises to soften beautifully over time. Careful cellaring will be rewarded.

PEAK DRINKING

Now – 2045

LAST TASTED

April 2024