

CWT 521

CABERNET SAUVIGNON MARSELAN 2022

In a time-honoured and distinctive Penfolds House Style, this Chinese Trial Wine combines the essence of Cabernet Sauvignon from the Shangri-La region and Marselan from Ningxia. The Shangri-La region is in the Yunnan province, one of the most beautiful locations in China. Yunnan is in the far southwest, bordering Burma, Laos and Vietnam. The high altitude of the mountainous vineyards makes ideal cool, dry conditions for ripening Cabernet Sauvignon. Ningxia is a small autonomous region in North-Central China. The province has been at the forefront of modern Chinese winemaking since 1982 and has attracted significant local and international investment in vineyards and production facilities. The region benefits from a South-North ridge called Helan Mountain which protects Ningxia from extreme weather from the West. The nearby Yellow River provides precious water for irrigation, delivered by highly efficient, sophisticated dripper systems. Due to exceptionally cold winters, the vines are buried underneath the soil by the end of November, and uncovered in April of the following year, a process that protects them from the elements.

GRAPE VARIETY

77% Cabernet Sauvignon, 23% Marselan

VINEYARD REGION

Shangri-La, Ningxia

WINE ANALYSIS

Alc/Vol: 14.5%, Acidity: 6.4 g/L, pH: 3.57

MATURATION

12 months in French oak (66% new, 17% 1-y.o.) and American oak (17% new) hogsheads

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

Shangri-La enjoyed more winter rainfall than in 2021, with low ground temperatures delaying budburst by 7-10 days. The growing season was marked by above-average rainfall, however August was mostly dry and sunny which provided ideal conditions for ripening Cabernet Sauvignon. The steady weather allowed for long hang times, ensuring good flavour and phenolic maturity. The 2022 season in Ningxia was marked by favourable growing conditions, with enough rainfall in August to elevate soil moisture profiles. Harvest began in mid-September and was completed by early October. The Marselan grapes showed great colours and flavours completed by mid-late October.

COLOUR

Purple core, red rim.

NOSE

The nose is both intriguing and complex, beckoning the senses with an almost ferrous intensity that speaks to the wine's earthy terroir. Entwined within this metallic frame are layers of confectionary delight (liquorice allsorts and red pastilles) adding sweetness. Fresh fennel emerges with its aromatic aniseed charm, followed by baking spices. The savouriness deepens as notes of tomato relish interplay with pancetta and cured beef, providing depth and richness, followed by caper berries and hints of brine.

PALATE

On the palate, sumac introduces itself first, offering its signature tang that invigorates the taste buds and provides a textural counterweight to the underlying umami flavours. This paves the way for a generous core of sweet dark fruits that envelops the mouth in velvety decadence. The tannins are fine yet persistent; they are powdery by nature but resolute in structure, lending support to the robust fruit profile without dominating it. Quartz minerality provides a crystalline clarity that is both refreshing and grounding amidst this richness. The savoury spice blend — cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice — weaves through each sip, accompanied by plum succulence and fenugreek's maple-like sweetness.

PEAK DRINKING

Now – 2032

LAST TASTED

April 2024