

# WATER WHEEL

THE ESTATE 2020

Red Blend - *Bendigo, Australia*

## Technical Notes

Picking started after dawn; they needed the sun to warm the grapes up a bit. Wines are loath to start fermenting if the grapes are below 53-57 degrees F., especially when relying on indigenous yeasts, as they do at Water Wheel. The “cap” of skins was lightly washed down with fermenting wine in the morning and plunged later in the day. After 5 days the skins looked a bit bleached; the wine was run off and the press wine kept separate. The latter ended up a little lighter than the run off wine - perfect timing. WW red wines follow the familiar path of aging in oak barrels, typically for two years. Most barrels are American oak hogsheads (of 300L. or 400 bottles) and they aim for 20% new oak each year. Maturing wine in barrels is an essential part of a red wine’s development in this part of the world. The hard tannins literally fall away, while the younger barrels also add the sweetness of fresh oak and spice.

UPC CODE: 850037778003

## About this Wine

Water Wheel Vineyards is the brainchild of Peter Cumming. His family has long been established as successful growers of tomatoes and cherries at Bridgewater-on-Loddon to the north-west of Bendigo in central Victoria. This is where the gold rush hit Australia in the 1850’s. The nearby town of Bendigo was built on the back of the gold mining industry back then and today is more of a university town. Fruit grown in this region is characterized by massive concentration, higher octanes and wonderful high natural acid levels, which keep these monolithic wines in balance. The diurnal temperature swing, around harvest time, is often over 50 degrees F each day. This makes for some really BIG wines, that age beautifully! Peter has picked the very best parcels of fruit for this wine, and the blend will change slightly each year, depending on Mother Nature. The 2020 vintage is blend of mostly Shiraz, with some Cabernet Sauvignon. As is Peter’s customary style – this wine punches well above its weight class!



## Wine Analysis

Alcohol: 15.9%

Total Acidity: 5.0 g/L

Residual Sugar: <2 g/L

pH: 3.96

## Assemblage

86% Shiraz,

14% Cabernet Sauvignon

## Vintage Details

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. We can now look back at the 2020 vintage, 2 years ago and 3 vintages past, with some satisfaction. 2020 was the first vintage for some years that wasn’t frenetic, hot, and earlier than the previous year. And oddly, the two subsequent vintages of 2021 and 2022 have been similarly cool and later than usual. Like most of Victoria, grape yields at Water Wheel were down in 2020: well below 1 ton/acre. Why? Peter’s best explanation is: that’s farming! It’s not like making widgets. Despite a lighter crop load, the cooler weather led to a two week delay in picking. The beautiful balance of berry and plum flavors we want in Shiraz was easily achieved during the slower ripening of 2020, even within the powerful style delivered by low yields.

## Tasting Notes

Deep, brick red color. Lush plum and berry on the nose and some dusty oak to complement the ripe fruit. The palate is rich and full, with good tannin-acid balance. On the finish the wine has some light chalky tannin and a little sweet vanilla oak. It would go well with many foods, but is still subtle enough to be enjoyed as a drink on its own. The Estate has good structure and will age well for many years. Expect the tannin to soften while the balance will be maintained as the sweet oak integrates to replace the fruit flavor as the latter becomes finer and longer with age. (Peter Cumming – proprietor)

