



VAGABOND GRENACHE 2023

McLaren Vale, South Australia



Technical Notes

From 4 separate, old, dry grown, bush trained vineyards in the revered Blewitt Springs district of McLaren Vale, planted in deep sands with some ironstone. The fruit was all hand-picked and about 2/3 was then wild fermented in a concrete pyramid which had layers of whole bunches and alternating layers of crushed fruit. This ferment had no mechanical extraction. The balance was wild fermented in an open fermenter with 35% whole bunches, and was hand plunged twice daily. This portion was aged in puncheons while the pyramid fermented was pressed back to a concrete egg and oak puncheons for maturation. The resulting layers of complexity and depth of flavor are exactly what was aimed for. Racked from there into blending tank and then straight to bottle, unfinned and unfiltered. A mere 3833 bottles were produced.

About this Wine

The benchmark for contemporary Aussie Grenache. It hails from Blewitt Springs, the Grand Cru of Aussie Grenache if ever there was one. Giles and Fergal have spent years searching out the best vineyard plots in this small Grenache enclave and now have enviable access to many of the best. In any given year, the Vagabond will be the sum of 3 - 4 different vineyards, all old, dry grown, bush vines planted on the characteristic sand. Exhaustive tasting in the vineyard leads to a harvest that is earlier than traditional and a vinification quite unlike any other wine. The core of this wine is wild fermented in a concrete pyramid layered with alternating whole bunches and crushed fruit. Fermentation begins spontaneously, the layers of whole bunches acting like a mesh through which the fermenting juice moves. Without any other form of extraction, this method retains the individual vineyard characters and energy of site that is the signature of Thistledown. More akin to Pinot than old school Grenache, the Vaga-bond is textural, aromatic, refined yet utterly delicious in equal measure.

UPC CODE: 8 58441 00693 4

Wine Analysis

Varietal: 100% Grenache
Alcohol: 13.5%
Total Acidity: 5.14 g/l
pH: 3.49
Residual Sugar: 2 g/l
SO2: 74 mg/l

✓ **VEGAN FRIENDLY**
✓ **SUSTAINABLE**
✗ **ORGANIC**
✗ **BIODYNAMIC**

Vintage Conditions

The third in a series of La Niña influenced vintages, 2023 was perhaps the most extreme. In an erratic season, the consistent theme was of cooler than average temperatures and wet weather periods during the ripening period. Yields varied massively from site to site and this meant for massive variations in ripening periods and more detailed vineyard work than ever before. The lack of intense heat resulted in one of the latest seasons on record and the wines made display elegance, brilliant aromatics and supreme balance.

Scores/Reviews

95 pts James Suckling

"Beautifully fragrant, mid-weighted grenache. Red-fruit allusions, pomegranate, menthol, dried rose petal and orange zest. 2023 was another cooler attenuated vintage, the last and perhaps the most challenging of a La Nina troika. Elegance writ large here, somehow synergistic with a Mediterranean-accented cru Beaujolais, such is the imminence, freshness, gritty tannin and shimmering transparency."

95 pts Wine Enthusiast

94 pts The Wine Advocate

91 pts Vinous

