

ST HENRI

SHIRAZ 2018



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, Port Lincoln, Robe, Padthaway, Clare Valley, Adelaide Hills

WINE ANALYSIS

Alc/Vol: 14.5%, Acidity: 6.7 g/L, pH: 3.62

MATURATION

12 months in 50+ Y.O vats

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

Relatively dry conditions coupled with near long-term winter and spring temperatures indicated an early start to the growing season. However, a spell of cold weather in November slowed vine phenology. Warm and sunny weather prevailed throughout most of spring, providing optimal conditions for flowering and fruit-set. The Barossa Valley experienced 22 days of temperature greater than 35°C in summer, while McLaren Vale experienced 17 days greater than 35°C. This warm and dry pattern continued in Clare Valley throughout the growing season with only one significant rain event (30mm) in early December. Robe and Padthaway also had warm, dry growing seasons by regional standards. Late flowering and the delayed onset of veraison throughout the South-East slowed harvest by a few weeks. Our grower vineyard in Port Lincoln enjoyed a near perfect season, with the cool maritime breezes providing optimal conditions for ripening. The warm, dry weather carried into autumn, setting up an Indian summer with favourable conditions for ripening grapes. A fine vintage for all Penfolds South Australian growing regions.

COLOUR

Deep inky blood-red

NOSE

The veil long clasped by St Henri is aromatically lifted. A 2018 St Henri cork is extracted revealing:

Clinically: The elution of flinty pencil and cordite.

Appetisingly: Warmed black olive - mustardy spiced wild rocket, haloumi.

Savoury: Scents of a Greek flat-leaf parsley salad, eggplant, capers.

Exotically: Freshly sliced fig and cut-rhubarb laced with cinnamon, cola spice, Chinotto, dusted nuts.

PALATE

Fruits (white plum, fresh fig and quandong) and charcuterie savouries abound.

Fresh vibrant acidity abetted by the cut-rhubarb noted aromatically above, and liquorice root.

Toasted pumpkin seed flavours, tannin-dry yet not puckering.

Mouth-watering, finely etched tannins 'mist up' the palate spectrum – a tactile fog!

Oak – *where art thou?*

PEAK DRINKING

Now – 2055

LAST TASTED

March 2021