

SHIRAZ 2003

CAPE MENTELLE'S STYLE OF SHIRAZ TAKES INSPIRATION FROM TECHNIQUES USED IN THE RHÔNE VALLEY. A SMALL PORTION OF WHOLE BUNCH FERMENTATION AND MINIMAL USE OF NEW OAK IS AIMED AT LIFTING THE REFINED FLORAL CHARACTERS OF THE VARIETY ALONG WITH THE MORE SAVOURY, SPICY ELEMENTS DERIVED FROM THE VINEYARD.

APPEARANCE	Deep ruby.
NOSE	Floral, violet aromas develop into lush plums and dark cherries along with hints of cedar, coffee and tobacco.
PALATE	Delicious mocha and cherry flavours cascade over the mid-palate leading into spicy white pepper and cardamom characters. The tannins are fine and powdery showing excellent persistence on a long and complex palate.
VINTAGE AND VINEYARD	A mild winter led to an early budburst. Spring was cool, wet and windy which slowed shoot growth. By December the weather had warmed up and we enjoyed some mild to very warm days until early March when it became very hot. Rain fell mid-March giving the vines some relief but the cool and cloudy conditions lingered giving just one week of perfect weather in April to harvest the rest of the reds before another larger front passed over. Shiraz is mainly sourced from our Wallcliffe and Trinders Estate vineyards, planted 26 and 13 years ago respectively, where the soils are gravel laterite derived from weathered granite with a gravel-clay sub-soil. Shoot and leaf removal is employed during the course of the season on all vines.
WINEMAKING TECHNIQUE	Grapes were harvested from 28 March to 10 April. Sugar averaged 24.5 brix and acid levels ranged between 5.6 and 6.5 grams per litre. Yields ranged between 4.5 and 8.3 tonnes per hectare reflecting the variable nature of the year. About 20% of the fruit was hand-picked and conveyed to the fermenters as whole bunches with the balance machine-harvested and crushed on top of the bunches. Fermentation proceeded rapidly and, following basket pressing, malolactic fermentation quickly follows in large oak vats. The wine was racked to barrel in July/August and aged in a 50:50 combination of French and American oak barrels of which 35% was new. The final blending took place in October 2004.
CLOSURE	Cork

SHIRAZ 2003- Technical Notes

TASTING NOTES

Violet aromas develop into lush plums and dark cherries along with hints of cedar, coffee and tobacco. Delicious mocha flavours cascade over the mid-palate complemented by white pepper and cardamom. The tannins are fine and powdery showing excellent persistence on a long and complex palate.

VINEYARD

Shiraz is mainly sourced from our Wallcliffe and Trinders Estate vineyards, planted 26 and 13 years ago respectively, where the soils are gravel laterite derived from weathered granite with a gravel-clay sub-soil. The vines are predominately vertically trained and cane pruned. A portion is also trained by the Scott Henry and TK2 method to help control the vigorous nature of the vines in certain areas. A small amount of shiraz is sourced from the McHenry and Darnell vineyards planted 7 kilometres west and 20 kilometres east of Margaret River township, both on the banks of the river. Here the soils are of a free draining, alluvial based type with a sheltered northerly aspect. Karri Park Vineyard fruit is a new addition to the blend exhibiting intense peppery flavours. Shoot and leaf removal is employed during the course of the season on all vines.

THE SEASON

A rather mild winter led to an early budburst, however spring was cool, wet and windy which slowed down shoot growth. By the end of spring the weather had warmed up and the rainfall that fell from September to early November was but a distant memory. Irrigation commenced in late December with the sting of early summer and we enjoyed some mild to very warm days until early March when it became very hot indeed. Vintage was in full swing by this stage, the early harvest caused by the lower than average yields and unseasonably hot conditions. The low yields were a direct result of a cold spring the previous vintage which affected bud fruitfulness. Rain fell mid-March giving the vines some relief but the cool and cloudy conditions lingered giving just a week of perfect weather in April to harvest the rest of the reds before another larger front passed over.

HARVEST

Grapes were harvested from 28 March to 10 April. Sugar averaged 24.5 brix and acid levels ranged between 5.6 and 6.5 grams per litre. Yields ranged between 4.5 and 8.3 tonnes per hectare reflecting the variable nature of the year. In the lower yielding vineyards the fruit ripened quicker which was a considerable advantage given the difficulty of the vintage.

VINIFICATION

About 20% of the fruit was hand-picked and conveyed to the fermenters as whole bunches with the balance machine-harvested and crushed on top of the bunches. Fermentation proceeded rapidly with the ferment warmed to 32°C to achieve a fast initial maceration. On the seventh day the wine was drained off and the skins and gently pressed in our state-of-the-art basket press with the hard pressings separated. Malolactic fermentation follows quickly in large oak vats. The wine was racked to barrel in July/August and aged in a 50:50 combination of French and American oak barrels of which 35% was new. In January the following year a preliminary blend was done. The final blending took place in October 2004 when 4% of grenache was added to enhance complexity.
Analysis: 14.9% alcohol, pH 3.48, 6.6 g/L acidity