

ST HENRI

Shiraz 2015

OVERVIEW	St Henri is a time-honoured and alternative expression of shiraz, and an intriguing counterpoint to Grange. It is unusual among 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 as it ages. It is matured in old, large oak vats that allow the wine to develop, imparting minimal, if any oak character. Although a small proportion of cabernet is sometimes used to improve structure, the focal point for St Henri remains shiraz.
GRAPE VARIETY	93% Shiraz, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon
VINEYARD REGION	McLaren Vale, Robe, The Peninsulas, Barossa Valley, Wrattontully, Adelaide Hills, Mt Benson
WINE ANALYSIS	Alc/Vol: 14.5%, Acidity: 7 g/L, pH: 3.66
MATURATION	12 months in 50+ y.o. large oak vats
VINTAGE CONDITIONS	Rainfall in autumn and early winter were close to the long-term average in most of South Australia's main growing regions. However, the rain stopped abruptly in early August with only a few light spring showers recorded. September through to March saw record low rainfall, stretching water supplies. Warm and dry conditions during flowering and fruit-set resulted in rapid grapevine growth and early flowering. During early summer temperatures dropped below average with no major heat waves recorded. The harvest progressed rapidly, with most blocks of shiraz picked earlier than usual. Although the conditions resulted in lower than anticipated yields, the quality of fruit across the board was exceptional.
COLOUR	Deep magenta, foreboding core
NOSE	Instantly recognisable. First impression – Penfolds. Second – St Henri. Wafts ascend akin to roasted meats – seared crust of venison, game meats. Then a sprinkling of crushed kola nut, star anise, black liquorice, quince paste. A further swirl or two unleashes more familial St Henri markers of dark chocolate ganache and a biscotti nuttiness.
PALATE	Complete, no gaps – spills across the palate <i>avec</i> a coating of fine (emery paper) polished tannins – inducing a 'St Henri silkiness'. An assertive wedge of fruit – dark berried – boysenberry, loganberry, and blackberry – <i>à la</i> 'Fruits of the Forest'. Yet, there's much more – certainly not only appealing fruit, friendly tannins and balance. Add: luminosity, buoyancy, vibrancy, harmony ... quite the package! Needs some time in bottle to unfurl, complex ... ever so youthful, yet dangerously accessible. Patience.
PEAK DRINKING	2020 – 2045
LAST TASTED	July 2018
