

ST HENRI

SHIRAZ 2016

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, 1,460 litre 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

95% Shiraz, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon

VINEYARD REGION

Barossa Valley, Adelaide Hills, McLaren Vale, Clare Valley, Coonawarra, Magill Estate

WINE ANALYSIS

Alc/Vol: 14.5%, Acidity: 6.7 g/L, pH: 3.72

MATURATION

12 months in 50+ y.o. large oak vats

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

Autumn and winter were dry and cool across South Australia. Below long-term average rainfall continued throughout spring and all through summer. The climactic conditions slightly delayed the start of the growing season in the Barossa Valley and other warmer regions. However, budburst, flowering, veraison and harvest were all earlier than is usually expected of Coonawarra. Warm conditions prevailed in the early part of the summer allowing vines to develop healthy canopies and good bunch set. Some late rain in January and early February was a welcome relief. Temperatures in spring and summer were above the long-term average, resulting in an early harvest for shiraz. More than 80% of McLaren Vale had been harvested by mid-March. Cool February conditions in the Adelaide Hills ensured ripening was steady and the slightly early start to vintage was a result of a mild and dry growing season. Grapes across all the main growing regions were able to ripen evenly and develop desirable flavours.

PEAK DRINKING

2022 - 2055

LAST TASTED

June 2019

COLOUR

Dark brick-red core, crimson on rim

NOSE

A wine that immediately invokes interest – its nose endearingly captivating/enticing/intriguing.

Fruits propelled from glass – black cherry, mulberry, blackcurrant, boysenberry ... and more.

A subliminal waft of star anise and savoury spices (not sweet) hover above.

With air/decant a perfumed zabaglione / crème anglaise / eggnog 'creaminess' also ascends.

At once, St Henri.

PALATE

Instant delivery, demands attention. Engulfs palate ... ever so deftly. No intimidation.

A pure-fruited retronasal continuum from the first sniff to the post-ingestion back-palate.

No gaps – call it saturation or density/compaction sans 'bigness' – apportioned correctly.

Red and dark-fruited, a compote of fresh prune and quince.

2016 + tempered shiraz + House Style + Penfolds = an assured St Henri collectable.