

CWT 521

CABERNET SAUVIGNON MARSELAN 2023



In a time-honoured and distinctive Penfolds House Style, this third Chinese Wine Trial combines the essence of Cabernet Sauvignon from the Shangri-La region and Marselan from Ningxia. The Shangri-La region is in the Yunnan province, one of the most beautiful locations in China. Yunnan is in the far Southwest, bordering Burma, Laos, and Vietnam. The high altitude of the vineyards provides ideal cool, dry conditions for ripening Cabernet Sauvignon. Ningxia, a small autonomous region in north-central China, has been at the forefront of modern winemaking since 1982. It has attracted significant local and international investment in both vineyards and production facilities. The region benefits from the Helan Mountain range, which runs North to South and shelters the area from harsh weather coming from the West. The nearby Yellow River supplies vital irrigation water, distributed via sophisticated drip systems. To withstand Ningxia's harsh winters, vines are carefully buried under soil by late November and uncovered in April – a traditional practice that protects them from extreme cold.

GRAPE VARIETY

Cabernet Sauvignon, Marselan

VINEYARD REGION

Shangri-La, Ningxia

WINE ANALYSIS

Alc/Vol: 14.5%, Acidity: 6.0, pH: 3.47

MATURATION

13 months in French and American oak hogsheads (24% new)

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

An overall warm 2022 winter led to an early start to the 2023 Shangri-La growing season. Budburst was reported in March, which is earlier than usual. Spring rainfall was above average, topping soil moisture profiles. Unusually cold temperatures in April and May slowed vine growth. Overcast conditions, rain, and snow were recorded in late April and early May. From mid-May, mostly warm and sunny conditions prevailed, ideal conditions for flowering. The region's favourable climate and high altitude ensure a long, stable growing season without risk of monsoons. Grapes developed thick skins with ample colour and tannin. Ningxia also had a favourable start to the growing season, with some spring rain freshening up the vines and invigorating canopies. The weather remained dry and sunny for the remainder of the growing season, with cool conditions prevailing over harvest allowing for an orderly intake of high-quality grapes.

COLOUR

Brick red.

NOSE

Distractingly, notes of roasted peppers stuffed with classic Italian herbs, eggplant and zucchini emerge – suggestive of another continent.

Upon sitting, wafts of rustic sweet paprika tempered by the herbal aroma of wild nettle tea better align with source.

Scents of dried tobacco leaf and frankincense hover above, adding intrigue and non-fruited complexity.

A suggestion of cherry wood provides a final flourish, indicative of high-quality oak maturation... and maybe China?

PALATE

An otherworldly structural and flavour charm reflects both varietal and regional composition.

Cabernet Sauvignon fruits afford a familial ID, while Marselan delivers mid-palate richness and a noble point-of-difference.

Savoury flavours of grilled lamb, rosemary, cumin, pink peppercorns, and celery salt contrast with an emerging sweetness of sticky date pudding, and lavender.

To complete the package, an acidity sensibility and tannin fineness & tension.

Arguably knocking on the door... of one day soon becoming a Penfolds Bin?!

PEAK DRINKING

Now – 2033

LAST TASTED

April 2025