

ST HENRI SHIRAZ 2022



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 has not 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

96% Shiraz, 4% Cabernet Sauvignon

VINEYARD REGION

Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, Padthaway

WINE ANALYSIS

Alc/Vol: 14.5%, Acidity: 6.8 g/L, pH: 3.69

MATURATION

14 months in large, seasoned oak vats

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

The Barossa Valley experienced a growing season with near-average winter rainfall and moderate La Niña effects. Soil moisture profiles were low at the start of spring due to below-average rain in August and September. October's heavy rains and isolated hail presented challenges, while a dry December led to temperate summer conditions, with minimal extreme heat. This allowed for a harvest under ideal conditions, enabling grapes to ripen steadily with strong varietal markers. McLaren Vale saw temperatures rarely exceeding 35°C, leading to an orderly harvest period. The cooler conditions were conducive to Shiraz grapes reaching optimal flavour and balance. Padthaway encountered an October frost but emerged well from a growing season devoid of harsh heat waves or rain-induced delays during harvest. Coonawarra started with below-average rainfall but received timely showers in July and a wet October. Frost was a concern with nine days of cold temperatures. However, this was mitigated by effective deployment of frost fans. The region enjoyed a cooler spring, but January's warmth brought excellent growing conditions leading to a rapid and uniform veraison. The moderate crop sizes allowed for natural balance, culminating in a harvest of high-quality Shiraz.

COLOUR

Saturated plum reds and violet.

NOSE

Instantly, recognisable as St Henri. The absence of new oak is a defining feature, a gentle swirl brings forth a pure expression of Shiraz. A joyous and ethereal fruit lift... First, raspberries, freeze-dried and dusted over coconut sponge. A scoop of wild berry gelato provides another layer of complexity. Closer inspection reveals scents of freshly-roasted coffee beans and cinnamon tea cake. With a little air, savoury notes emerge. Carpaccio-like freshness, replete with marinated olives, peppers, and brine.

PALATE

The wine has a real presence, weighty yet buoyant. It has stature and confidence. There is a complex assortment of flavours vying for attention. Hazelnuts, macadamia, white chocolate, and Dutch liquorice are first noted. There is a lovely fruit saturation, reminiscent of Kir Royale cocktail, summer berry pudding, and melted chocolate. The tannins are ripe, fully integrated, and effortlessly anchor the fruit. A classic St Henri that delivers in the full flush of youth but promises so much more for those inclined to cellar this wine for a few decades.

PEAK DRINKING

Now - 2050

LAST TASTED

April 2025