

TAPANAPPA

A U S T R A L I A

TAPANAPPA 2009 WHALEBONE VINEYARD MERLOT CABERNET FRANC

History

Tapanappa acquired the then 30 year-old Whalebone Vineyard in 2002 and completely renovated it onto a new trellis supporting a shoot thinned vertical canopy.

There are just 1.2 hectares of Merlot and 0.8 hectares of Cabernet Franc planted in 1974 in the Whalebone Vineyard, possibly the first plantings of those varieties in South Australia.

The old Merlot and Cabernet Franc vines of the Whalebone Vineyard have responded magnificently. After a forty-year struggle the vine roots have penetrated the deeper limestone layers and are extracting a balance of moisture and nutrient to sustain a meagre crop of 2 tonnes/hectare. The vines have sufficient canopy and root system to fully ripen the harvest relying only on natural rainfall.

Vintage Notes

The 2009 vintage was cooler than average with a heat summation of 1367°C days for the growing season versus the average of 1450°C days.

2009 is remembered for the blistering heat and bush fires at the beginning of February but the heat had little effect on Whalebone Vineyard and the rest of the growing season was significantly cooler than average.

After the frost decimated vintages of 2007 and 2008, the 2009 vintage yielded a healthier 3 tonnes/hectare and the Merlot (64%) was harvested on the 31st of March and the Cabernet Franc (36%) on the 7th of April.

The combined harvest analysis was 25 Brix, pH 3.55 and acid of 5gpl.

Winemaking Notes

The two varieties were harvested and made into wine as separate batches and blended before preparation for bottling.

The hand-harvested grapes were delivered to the winery in the Piccadilly Valley where they were de-stemmed, lightly crushed and chilled as must to 2°C into 0.8 tonne fermentation tubs.

After a cold maceration of 4 days our own yeast and bacterial strains were added and 2 days later fermentation started.

Gentle hand plunging of the cap of skins in the tubs was performed daily and the peak fermentation temperature was 32°C. The fermentation finished after one week of hand plunging and the tubs were sealed down for a further week of post fermentation maceration on skins.

The young wine was drained and pressed through a small air-bag press and gravitated immediately to French oak barriques, 70% new, and remained on full lees until the malo-lactic fermentation finished in early spring.

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At the completion of malo-lactic fermentation, the wine was racked off lees and a small dose of sulphur dioxide was added and the wine returned to barrique for a total of 22 months in oak.

The separate wines were clear racked and blended prior to bottling in February of 2011.

The in-bottle analysis of the 2009 Tapanappa Whalebone Vineyard Merlot Cabernet Franc is:

Alcohol	14.0%
pH	3.4
Total Acid	5.48gpl
Volatile Acidity	0.6gpl
SO ₂	87ppm

The Taste Of The Wine

2009 was a wonderful cooler vintage at Tapanappa's Whalebone Vineyard.

2009 was very similar to 2004 and wines of these vintages have the refined structure and delicate aromatics of a cooler vintage.

2009 Tapanappa Whalebone Vineyard Merlot Cabernet Franc has floral and briary aromas attributable to Cabernet Franc combined with the plum-sauce aromas of cool grown, fully ripe Merlot.

The flavours are intense but refined with the freshness and vibrancy of Cabernet family blackcurrant and spice accentuated by the smoky and minty hallmarks of the Whalebone terroir.

The most endearing aspect of this cool vintage wine is the beautiful and significant tannin structure folding into an even mouth coating savoury finish.

2009 was a great vintage at the Whalebone Vineyard and the wine will reward cellaring for at least two decades.

This wine "*is a pure expression of the unique terroir of the Whalebone Vineyard.*"

Winemaker

Brian Croser

Bottled in February 2011. Only 420 dozen grown and made.