

TAPANAPPA

A U S T R A L I A

TAPANAPPA 2014 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

2014 was a cool and rainfall sufficient vintage at the Whalebone Vineyard in Wrattobully. The 40 year old vines received 121% of average annual rain from May 2013 to April 2014 at Whalebone Vineyard for vintage 2014. The wet winter and spring were also *much* warmer than average, by about 1.5°C.

This unusually warm, early and damp start to the season accelerated shoot growth which competed for energy with the flowering process in late November, causing “coulure”, or the failure of whole flowers to set fruit and to drop off the vine.

In November a sudden drop in average temperatures exaggerated the “coulure” effect by causing the flowers that remained to set poorly, the hen and chicken effect of “millenderage”. This affected the early flowering Merlot more than the later ripening Cabernet Franc and the crop level was significantly reduced.

Frequent beneficial rainfalls through the growing season followed the wet 2013 winter.

The heat summation for the 2014 growing season at Whalebone was 1414°C days compared to the average for the past 10 years at 1486°C days.

At Whalebone Vineyard the Merlot grapes were harvested late on the fifth of April and the Cabernet Franc on the fifteenth of April, both at 24 Brix sugar and with perfectly mature tannins, colour and flavours.

Winemaking notes

The hand selected bunches of Merlot and Cabernet Franc from Whalebone Vineyard were separately de-stemmed, partially crushed and chilled to 2°C into tubs each containing 0.9 tonnes.

After a 4-day cold maceration the tubs began fermentation and were hand plunged each day for the 10-day duration of fermentation.

The maximum temperature reached at the peak of fermentation was 34°C and after the completion of fermentation the tubs were sealed down for 7-days post fermentation maceration.

The tubs of Merlot and Cabernet Franc were separately tipped into a small airbag press and pressed straight to French oak barriques, 60% new and the balance 1 use.

Malolactic fermentation occurred in barrique in the spring, the barriques were then racked off full lees and the wines were sulphured and returned to barrique for another 18 months.

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In April 2016 the wines were clear racked from barrique and 68% Merlot and 32% Cabernet Franc were blended ready for bottling in May 2016.

The post bottling analysis of 2014 Tapanappa Merlot-Cabernet Franc is:

Alcohol	14.4%,
pH	3.46
Total Acid	5.8 gpl.
Sulphur	77 ppm
Volatile acid	0.45 gpl

The taste of the wine

Tapanappa 2014 Merlot Cabernet Franc is an intense cool year wine with vibrant Merlot plum fruit, reminiscent of Christmas pudding fruit and Cabernet Franc floral and leafiness and refined but determined tannins. It is an elegant wine with loads of primary varietal fruit.

The colour is medium density and purple edged, the aroma is of cigar box and complex ripe fruit and the earthy terroir nuances of the Whalebone Vineyard. The core of the wine is sweet and refined but the finish is of gentle savoury tannin. 2014 Tapanappa Merlot Cabernet Franc is a keeper!

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

Winemaker

Brian Croser

Only 240 dozen grown and made.