

TAPANAPPA

A U S T R A L I A

TAPANAPPA 2016 WHALEBONE VINEYARD CABERNET FRANC MERLOT

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

2016 was a very dry and much warmer than average El Nino dominated vintage at Tapanappa's Whalebone Vineyard in Wrattenbully. Only 50% of average rainfall was recorded for the growing season, the driest ever. Flowering occurred in warm dry sunny conditions, promoting early fruit set.

2016 vintage was the warmest ever at Whalebone Vineyard at 1801°C-days versus the average at 1479°C-days. The very warm dry vintage fully ripened the Cabernet Franc and Merlot at Whalebone Vineyard to a relatively high sugar level and rich ripe flavours.

Winemaking notes

The hand selected bunches of Merlot from Whalebone Vineyard were harvested on the 22nd of March and the Cabernet Franc on the 31st of March. The bunches were destemmed, partially crushed and chilled to 2°C into 0.9 tonne tubs.

After a 4-day cold maceration, the tubs were inoculated with Tapanappa's own yeast and were hand plunged each day of the 10-day fermentation. The maximum temperature reached was 34°C and after the completion of fermentation the tubs were sealed down for a 7-day 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, 90% of which were new and the balance 1 use.

After 20 months in oak barriques, the wines were clear racked from barrique and 56% Cabernet Franc and 44% Merlot were blended for bottling in February 2018.

The post bottling analysis of 2016 Tapanappa Merlot-Cabernet Franc is:

Alcohol	14.7%	pH	3.52
Total Acid	5.5 gpl	Sulphur	55 ppm
Volatile acid	0.62 gpl		

The taste of the wine

Although 2016 Tapanappa Whalebone Vineyard Cabernet Franc-Merlot is from the warmest vintage at Wrattenbully, it is fresh, elegant and ethereal. The aroma is dominated by the floral and spice of Cabernet Franc, red berries and only a hint of Merlot's plum pudding richness. The varietal complexity is underpinned by an earthy, smoky Eucalypt bouquet typical of the Whalebone terroir. The flavours are fresh and lively with an underlying varietal complexity.

TAPANAPPA

A U S T R A L I A

Despite the warmth of the 2016 vintage the Tapanappa Whalebone Vineyard Cabernet Franc-Merlot has the elegance and finesse expected of this right bank varietal blend. The tannins are fine and grainy providing a savoury and long finish.

This is an excellent Australian example of “the right bank” blend and *a pure expression of the unique Whalebone Vineyard terroir.*

Winemaker

Brian Croser

Only 250 dozen grown and made.