

TAPANAPPA

A U S T R A L I A

TAPANAPPA WHALEBONE VINEYARD 2017 MERLOT CABERNET FRANC

*Bottled in February 2019
Only 440 dozen
Grown and made*

The Taste of the Wine

2017 Tapanappa Whalebone Vineyard Merlot-Cabernet Franc has a medium dark garnet colour with a purple edge.

The aromas are violet floral from the Cabernet Franc and mulberry cassis from the Merlot. The slight mint and fresh earth of the Whalebone terroir is melded with the cedar of the oak and the olive of the tannin.

The flavours reflect the aroma, and the fruit is immediately sweet and ripe, graduating to a refined tannin and balanced acid finish.

This is an intense complex wine, with finesse as well as strength and is a “true expression of the unique Whalebone Vineyard terroir” from an exceptional vintage.

History

The Whalebone Vineyard was purchased immediately after the formation of Tapanappa in 2002.

The Whalebone Vineyard is a terroir particularly suited to the varieties Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Shiraz.

Not even the pioneers who planted the vineyard could have realised how special the site is.

Situated at 37° 10' S and 140° 87' E at an altitude of 80 meters, the Whalebone Vineyard is on the dunal ridge of the oldest shoreline of the plain which gently leans away to the Great Southern Ocean 80 kilometres to the west.

The West Naracoorte Range was formed along the north south Kanawinka Fault when the land began to rise about 0.8 million years ago, causing the Southern Ocean to recede away to its current shoreline. The ridge is seated on 35 million year old Oligocene limestone (very similar to St Emilion in Bordeaux) and it is in this limestone that the bones of a whale were trapped and are now exposed in a cave eroded into the limestone beneath the Whalebone Vineyard.

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Vintage Notes

2017 was one of the latest vintages on record despite being warm at 1585C days versus the average of 1487C days. The Merlot was harvested on the 9th of April and the Cabernet Franc on the 18th of April.

The harvest was delayed by 2 to 3 weeks because of the exceptionally wet winter and the cool spring that combined to delay bud burst. Harvested in the cool dry conditions of mid-autumn, the fruit achieved deep colour and intense flavour while preserving finesse and freshness.

The two aphorisms that apply to 2017 are that “the best wines are made in cool areas in warmer than average vintages” and that “the best wines are made from regions and varieties where the harvest is in mid-Autumn.”

2017 is a wonderful vintage from the unique Whalebone Vineyard terroir

Winemaking Notes

The Merlot and Cabernet Franc were hand harvested from the Whalebone Vineyard and delivered at night to the Tapanappa Winery in the Piccadilly Valley.

The grapes were destemmed, lightly roller crushed and chilled to 5C on the way to 0.85 tonne fermenting tubs. The crushed must was cold soaked on skins for 3 days before the fermentation was initiated. After fermentation began the tubs were hand plunged daily, fully immersing the skins in the fermenting juice. The fermentation lasted for 11 days after which the wine was left on skins for a 7-day maceration under inert gas cover.

The Merlot and Cabernet Franc wines were separately gently pressed away from the skins and immediately gravitated to French oak barriques, 60% new and 40% single use, to undergo malo-lactic fermentation. At the end of malo-lactic fermentation the wines were racked off gross lees and returned to barrique for a further 18 months of maturation.

In December 2018 the wines were clear racked from the barriques and blended, 65% merlot and 35% Cabernet Franc. The finished wine was bottled in February 2019.

The in-bottle analysis of Tapanappa Foggy Hill Vineyard 2019 Pinot Noir is:

pH 3.5

Total Acid 5.53 g/L

SO₂ 92 ppm

Volatile Acid 0.51 g/L

Alcohol 14.5 %

Winemaker BRIAN CROSER