

# TAPANAPPA

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## A U S T R A L I A

### *TAPANAPPA WHALEBONE VINEYARD 2018 MERLOT CABERNET FRANC*

Bottled in February 2020

Only 550 dozen

Grown and made

Tapanappa acquired the Whalebone Vineyard in 2002 and completely renovated the vines onto a new trellis supporting a shoot thinned vertical canopy. The old Merlot and Cabernet Franc vines have responded magnificently. After a fifty-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 4 tonnes/hectare.

#### The Taste of the Wine

2018 Tapanappa Whalebone Vineyard Merlot-Cabernet Franc has an intense dark garnet colour with a purple edge. The aromas are leafy and floral from the Cabernet Franc and rich plum pudding from the Merlot. The slight mint and fresh earth of the Whalebone terroir is melded with the cedar of the oak and the olive aroma 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 a ripe complex wine, with intensity as well as strength and is a “true expression of the unique Whalebone Vineyard terroir” from a warm vintage.

#### Vintage Notes

2018 was the second warmest vintage on record after 2016. Despite being warm at 1799C days versus the average of 1464C days there were no heat waves and fewer than normal days above 35C. The rainfall post veraison for February and March was less than half of the average.

The Merlot and the Cabernet Franc were harvested on the 21st of March which is about the normal harvest time for these varieties at Wrattobully. The two aphorisms that apply to 2018 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.”

2018 is a ripe vintage from the unique Whalebone Vineyard terroir.

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### 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 2C on the way to 0.85 tonne fermenting tubs. The crushed must was cold soaked on skins for 2 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 and reached a maximum temperature of 33C. At the end of fermentation, 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, 50% new and 50% 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 2019 the wines were clear racked from the barriques and blended, 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Franc. The finished wine was bottled in January 2020.

### In-bottle analysis is:

pH - 3.47

TA - 5.4 g/L

SO<sub>2</sub> (Total) - 48 mg/L

VA - 0.52 g/L

Alcohol - 14.5 %

Winemaker BRIAN CROSER