

K A E S L E R



Old Bastard Shiraz 2007

Pruning was a pleasure in the winter of 2006 (as the vineyard crew scoffs, as I didn't do any). The days were cold but the sky was impeccably blue, and it didn't rain. It didn't rain for quite some time, and in fact at the time of writing this in May 2009, it still hasn't really rained enough for a sustainable years farming for the last 3 years.

Budburst started about a week early which is normal after a dry winter, but what followed was a very frightening 4 months of perilous frost scenarios that swept through out Southern Australia. Whilst it is not normal for our vineyards to be frosted, record cold mornings and the continuing dry spell, which accentuates the incidence of frost, just wouldn't abate. It seemed as if every week a new region was stung if not wiped out, by vicious frost, the likes of which had only been experienced by serious old timers. In the case of Coonawarra, 7 devastating frosts in a row. Where the hell was global warming when we needed it and when was it going to be our turn to burn? It seemed inevitable.

We made it to Christmas and passed the full moon frost bogey and for the first time in the 2007 growing season looked forward with enthusiasm.

Although we had cheated the frosts, the dry weather and the cold had taken its toll on our crop level, with fruit set being uneven and poor. By January we where resigned to lower crop levels but things just kept unravelling with the vines rejecting berries in an event called "berry shatter". The berries literally just fall off, as the vine cannot sustain them. It's fascinating to watch Mother Nature dictate the vines on what to do next, to see the season through to the end.

Needless to say harvest was early and it was with shock that we began to harvest then weigh our crops, surely the pickers had missed rows. All told, our weights where down about 65% percent on our own vineyards with a record low of 700 kilograms per tonne average on our farms in McLaren Vale and it wasn't over just yet. Normally 1000 kilos of fruit gives about 680 litres of wine or about 900 bottles, this on top of everything else was slashed to 570 or about 760 bottles.

Welcome to grape growing in a tough year. I love it I really do, it sorts out who has been pinching, who isn't paying attention and who won't take risks - because it's only up from here.

The Old Bastard block I think, shows its quality in years like this. As a function of the weather, soil moisture was at an all time low, irrigation didn't really help but older vines on deeper clays always seem to find something to rely on in these situations. It was genuinely an older vines year. The younger the vineyard, the more stressed the wines seemed to appear from them.

Needless to say production in 2007 is down, but we are very happy with the wine although it's a different style to the previous 3 years. Single vineyard expression at its wildest extreme.

Colour: Crimson

Nose: Some bright cassis and strawberry. Deep set black berry and ripe plum. Sandalwood, cedar and roasted meats. The primary fruits are a little more contained relative to the maturation induced aromas this year. Still retains nice purity which is the core of this vineyard. Time in decanter will help the aroma immeasurably

Palate: As a very young wine in maturation, this wine was a little too bitter for my liking. We came to the conclusion that perhaps we had fermented on skins a little too long and pressed a little hard. I don't think that now. The tannin at the time of release is a fraction disjointed but extrapolating from where it has been I am quite confident, it will come around just nicely. Overall the palate is a little softer than normal, and a fraction shorter. I anticipate it maturing a little earlier as well, although it is still a comfortable 10-15 year proposition.

We are enormously proud of the 2007 as we all worked hard to get it here.

Reid Bosward

Alc: 15.5%



