

K A E S L E R



Old Bastard Shiraz 2009

The weather from 2008 vintage has been well documented although its impact on vintage was widely dramatized and mostly inaccurate. One lingering consequence though was the mindset of the winemaker and grower going into 2009. It was one of caution.

The spring and winter rains were better than they had been in the previous two years, although, the strains of drought were still hard to shift from the front of one's mind. The vines seemed to be in good spirits. The crop load was modest and at it had to be as the root systems of the older vines had yet to experience the modest season's rain fall and had potential to signal time out with work still to do.

As the viticultural season rounded the last bend, it appeared that again, heat would deal itself in the game and possibly rain, either way it would not be a "pick when you feel" style of year. As maturity loomed it was clear that courage would be required as the weather was going to split the season in half. Courage would be required to wait through the potential of bad weather or courage would be required to pick in advance. With older vineyards that ripen and mature earlier the instinct was to pick before and bank it. The call has had a huge influence on the OB style for 2009.

The decision to harvest earlier meant some rudimentary changes needed to be made to the winemaking methods. This was mostly in the use of warmer ferments and tighter oak selection. It was a harder wine to make as it didn't really declare itself for about 18 months. All faith was with the site and the wines it had delivered in the past. A sinewy, stalky compressed wine was what we first saw.

Colour: Red enough

Nose: Bright and welcoming, but still an eye of fruit that is hard to un-wind. What can be seen though is a bowl of red fruits, ink with a streak of fresh rhubarb. The oak leaves a scent of Arabic spice market, not too strong though

Palate: As the first sip enters the palate it is with bright structured acid. The acid is soft and milk chocolate like, it has some shape and texture of its own. After the acid rests and prepares the tongue, a nice glow of fruits emerge, not too dis-similar to the aroma, but pomegranate and rhubarb prevail. The finish is of superfine talc like tannins, mostly from the fruit but a little wood tannin can be detected but will meld with time.

Notes: This is a very restrained style of OB, backwards in that the palate structure is opposite to older vintages with its acid lead instead of fruit, backwards in that it reaches back to the Barossa styles of the 80's and backwards in that it will require time to unfold. Its lines and purity suggest to me that it has plenty of foundation to support bottle age and I suspect that unlike the 2008, this wine will evolve with bottle age being its key feature. I think it could be a genuine 30 years prospect.

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Winemaker