



HENSCHKE

Exceptional wines from outstanding vineyards

Hill of Grace 2008

50th Anniversary Vintage

Grape Variety

100% shiraz grapes from pre-phylloxera material brought from Europe by the early settlers in the mid-1800s and grown on the Hill of Grace vineyard in the Eden Valley.

Technical Details

Harvest Date: 9-13 March | *Alcohol:* 14.5% | *pH:* 3.56 | *Acidity:* 6.1g/L

Maturation

Matured in new French (84%) and American (16%) hogsheads for 21 months prior to blending and bottling.

Background

Over 165 years ago Johann Christian Henschke came from Silesia to settle and farm in the Eden Valley region. By the time third-generation Paul Alfred Henschke took over the reins in 1914, the famous Hill of Grace vines were more than 50 years old. They were planted around the 1860s by an ancestor, Nicolaus Stanitzki, in rich alluvial soil in a shallow fertile valley just north-west of the winery. The red-brown earth grading to deep silty loam has excellent moisture-holding capacity for these dry-grown vines, which sit at an altitude of 400m, with an average rainfall of 520mm. Hill of Grace is a unique, delineated, historic single vineyard that lies opposite a beautiful old Lutheran church which is named after a picturesque region in Silesia called Gnadenberg, meaning Hill of Grace. Cyril Henschke made the first single-vineyard shiraz wine from this vineyard in 1958 from handpicked grapes vinified in traditional open-top fermenters.

Vintage Description

The 2008 vintage in Eden Valley was preceded by an average rainfall and a mild and unusually frost-free spring with regular rainfall periods. Fine flowering weather meant good set despite the expectation that the previous drought year of 2007 would affect yields. The vines also showed surprisingly vigorous growth. A dry and hotter than average early summer caused smaller berry and bunch size. Although temperatures climbed to over 40C around New Year and in mid-February, the weather from mid-January through February was the coolest for 30 years, allowing amazing development of fruit colour, flavour and maturity. In early March, South Australia suffered an unprecedented record heat wave of 15 days over 35C. The unexpected searing heat seemed never-ending and resulted in stressed vines, significant leaf drop, escalating sugar levels in the fruit and significant shrivel. A cool change followed, which brought relief. Selective early morning handpicking, leaving shrivelled fruit on the vines, gave the best quality, resulting in some amazing intensely coloured and flavoured reds, in particular shiraz.

Wine Description

Intense deep crimson in colour. The nose is attractive and enticing with aromas of sweet blackberry, blueberry, Satsuma plum and rhubarb, with characteristic nuances of oriental spices, black tea leaves, anise, tar and cedar. The palate is rich and concentrated with spicy plum, crushed herbs and Dutch licorice flavours. An amazing balance of acid, fruit intensity, weight and length create a powerful palate that finishes with long, fine tannins.

Reviewed December 2012



Cellaring Potential

Excellent vintage,
20+ years (from vintage).

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