



2013 Shiraz Viognier

2013 was a remarkable vintage. The days were warmer and the nights cooler than average and the rain came just when we needed it.

The 2013 carries the extra degree of opulence that you see in the great years. It is beautifully perfumed; ethereal, elegant and alluring. It has the structure to age very well. 5% co-fermented Viognier.

The grapes for the Shiraz Viognier are only from estate grown fruit and the vines which provide this fruit have an average age of around 15 years.

The subsoils at Clonakilla are of volcanic origin (dacite) with a layer of wind-blown material (called parna) of varying depths overlaying the dacite. The parna is responsible for the clay soils at Clonakilla which have excellent moisture and nutrient holding capacity. This, in combination with good winter/spring rainfall and mild early season growing temperatures, provide for optimum conditions for vine growth.

All the estate grown Shiraz vines are spur pruned and VSP trellised, with a wide separation (usually 2 m) between vines to allow for the excellent vine growth achieved at Clonakilla. Yields per vine would be considered high in comparison with certain overseas experience but not excessive for our Shiraz vines which have big canopies and so can easily ripen 6 kg of fruit in most years. Vine management is kept as simple as possible with the aim to grow well watered, disease-free vines that don't, in most seasons, require any shoot or bunch thinning.

With respect to winemaking, again things are kept as simple as possible, in order to let the site express itself. The estate Shiraz is picked at relatively low Baumes (for Australian standards), around 13 Be and, after crushing, the fruit is macerated cold for 3 or 4 days. Fermentation is spontaneous and the ferments are allowed to get warm (up to 32 degree Celsius) finishing in a 1 week or so. Plunging is done 3 times per day and oxygen may also be introduced (Pneumatage) during the peak fermentation period. Most batches are left on skins for another 2 weeks to allow for tannin extraction and development.

The Shiraz Viognier is usually made with around 25% whole bunch inclusion in the ferment (sometimes more in warmer years, maybe less in the cooler seasons). Viognier is co-fermented with the Shiraz at 5% of the final blend. Only French oak (coopers include Francias Frere, Saury and Taransaud) is used at Clonakilla with around 1/3rd new oak each season. Traditionally we have used barriques (228 L) only, but in recent years more of the Shiraz Viognier is matured in puncheons (500L). Time in barrel is relatively short at 11 months. The aim with oak management is for oak character to always be in the background. 14.0% Alc/Vol