

# HEAD

BAROSSA

## 2023 HEAD LES BLANCS

### *White Grenache et al*

BAROSSA

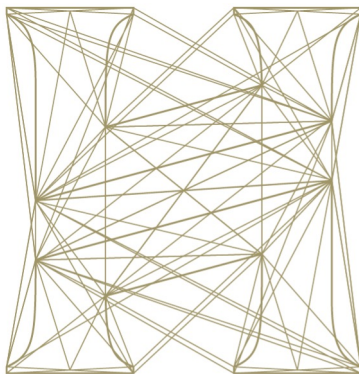


The discovery of an abandoned bush vine vineyard in 2020 would lead me on a remarkable journey of discovery and understanding Barossa's often overlooked white wine heritage. 40 old bush vines standing 10 feet tall like small, old trees on the banks of the Para River were ignored because 'no winemaker wanted them'.

In 2008, in looking for neutrality, high acidity, etc, I had already started using white varieties to acidify my red wines, and these old beauties gave me another string for the bow. A little research found that they were planted in 1953 from cuttings off the Helbig vineyard in Greenock (now owned by the Ashmead family). The variety was penciled in at the time as 'White Grenache' and was then controversially, during the 70's, identified by visiting Oenologists as 'possibly Biancone'. The mystery continued and a DNA test was ordered but I'll keep the results under wraps for now as I prefer the original naming.

In 2023, we finally hand-picked a small amount of fruit and created one small barrel of wine. We also made a barrel of wine from Savagnin planted in 2001 (originally planted as Alberino?! — a whole other story!) and combined them with a barrel of Viognier from Eden Valley. The result of this very patient process is the start of 'Les Blancs', or if you prefer, 'The Whites' of the Barossa. The wine will be allowed to grow, change and speak of the many old Barossa white wine vineyards and the seasons they belong to.

Each of the parcels in 'Les Blancs' were made the same way — zero additions, aged on lees in neutral barrels for 9 months and then a small addition of sulphur before bottling. Les Blancs is a complete and savoury dry white expression of the Barossa and the magnificent old vineyards that adorn its varied and dry land. Zesty lemon and white flowers with a rich mid palate and a fine saline, moreish finish. Try with baked chicken or a nutty hard cheese. Drink now. *Alex Head*



RAINFALL: 573ml (April '22-March '23 avg. 438ml)

VINEYARD: Nuriootpa (280m) & Mengler's Hill (500m)

VARIETAL: 50% White Grenache, 30% Savagnin, 15% Viognier, 5% Vementino

VINE AGE: 70 & 20 years

SOIL/ROCK: Sandy, silty river loam & red clay, quartz & ironstone

AVG. YIELD: 2.0t/a or 34hl/h

PRODUCTION: 100 cases

VINIFICATION: Handpicked fruit with whole bunch press into neutral barrels, indigenous yeast. Malolactic fermentation

BOTTLING: December 23, minimal So2

ACIDITY: 6.2g/l

ALCOHOL: 12.5% G/F: 0.5gm/L