

Handpicked No.5
2014 Cabernet Sauvignon
Coonawarra, South Australia

Nº.5

STORY

Ten years ago we set ourselves a challenge to make the great Victorian Shiraz – the first wine in our search for vinous perfection. At Handpicked Wines we salute the diversity of wines from all over the world so, naturally, we could not stop at Shiraz, or Victoria.

We added Shiraz wines from Barossa and Beechworth, both supreme expressions of the grape and the region. In a celebration of Australia’s great wine styles, there is simply no show without Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon.



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The Finer Details

VINEYARDS

The small patch of red earth around Coonawarra in South Australia is unremarkable in many ways: a long way from any urban centre, it is flat with broad horizons, hinting at the ancient sea that once covered this land. It is what lies beneath that makes Coonawarra extraordinary wine country.

One of the earliest identified great wine terroirs in Australia, Coonawarra's terra rossa strip is a shallow layer of red clay loam over white limestone that naturally limits vine vigour while giving access to pure water reserves. The climate is continental with significant maritime influence from the Southern Ocean 60km away.

The result is naturally low-yielding vines that ripen slowly in the warm days and cool nights of autumn to produce Cabernet wines of exceptional concentration and balance.

This wine was grown on the terra rossa strip near Penola, at the southern end of Coonawarra. The vines are 20-year-old spur-pruned CW 44, a locally selected high-quality clone.

WINEMAKING

This wine is a natural expression of healthy, ripe fruit with inherent good structure and mature tannins. The fruit was picked in dry weather in early May and was destemmed and partially crushed before fermentation in open fermenters with twice-daily rack and return to extract flavour, colour and tannin.

The wine was matured for 16 months in French oak hogsheads and barriques; about half were first or second use barrels. We chose St Martin and Demptos barrels with a tight grain and deep, slow toast to add flavour and structure without charr notes. During the crucial stage of blending each barrel was assessed and only the finest were reserved for this wine.

Vintage 2014 in Coonawarra was not a blockbuster, it was much better. The 2014 Cabernets combine elegance and power, creating wines of great balance and longevity. Good rains over winter gave a welcome boost to the aquifer, which, together with careful canopy management, proved a great advantage over the hot, dry summer.

Coonawarra's characteristic autumn of moderate days and cool nights allowed a long-slow ripening period - perfect for Cabernet - and the harvest continued into May, making it one of the longest seasons on record.

TASTING NOTE

This wine has all the defining aromas of Cabernet Sauvignon – cassis, ripe blackberry and a leafy freshness – with the added depth of mint and dark chocolate that is quintessentially Coonawarra.

The palate is full bodied with deep cassis and blackberry flavours layered with rich dark chocolate, mint freshness and subtle cedar and toffee oak notes. The tannins are firm and fine, driving to a long and satisfying finish.