

THISTLEDOWN



Fool on the Hill Grenache 2021

Eden Valley, Barossa

(only 1101 bottles produced)

As one of the “outsiders” we’ve always been drawn to people with a similarly maverick streak – those willing to do things the hard way. But the path to success is rarely an even, linear one. Doubters, cynics and dilettantes line the path and it takes an iron will to continue on. When the destination is not yet known, or even in sight, one’s sanity may even be questioned. This only seeks to galvanise and to spur one forward.

The Fool on the Hill is sourced from two tiny plots of essentially dry grown bush-vine Grenache, planted by Joel Mattschoss, high in the Eden Valley on soils that require a vine to struggle. It’s a spectacular plot with an unusually bright future, though the impenetrable soils, lack of adequate water and exposure would have led all but the bravest to question the sense of the project.

Vintage Conditions

Rare is the vintage that combines good yields and high quality but 2021 was just that. A remarkable vintage in that it was once again pandemic affected but that it was measured and mild with none of the heat spikes or drought conditions of recent years. With good levels of winter rains filling soil profiles, the mild weather with intermittent rains throughout the growing and ripening season ensured that fruit ripened over a long period of time and the vintage was one of the longest in recent history. The results are spectacular, healthy fruit, moderate sugars and complex flavours, have resulted in wines of beautiful balance, fragrance and varietal typicity.

Viticulture

One of the highest Grenache vineyards in South Australia at 550m, the meagre soils are strewn with pink quartz and ironstone. 3 clonal selections of Grenache have been planted in bush-vine form with only a little water to establish them. Still young by our standards, these small vines yield fruit with high intensity.

Winemaking

The fruit was hand-picked early in the morning of 27th March before swift transport to the winery where we retained 20% whole bunches. A gentle ferment in concrete egg was followed by pressing to 500 litre 2nd and 3rd year French oak.

Tasting

The signature Thistledown lifted aromatics are present but the palate offers more sinew and spice than those from McLaren Vale. Textural, almost chewy but polished dark cherry, mineral and warm spices carry through to a finish of incredible length.

Alcohol: 14.5%

Total Acidity: 5.35 g/l

pH: 3.52

Residual Sugar: 1 g/l

SO₂: 77 mg/l

Fining: None

Vegan: Yes

Vegetarian: Yes

