



2004 THE LAST DITCH VIOGNIER

Region

McLaren Vale, South Australia

Variety

Viognier

Maturation

9 months in 4 –10 year
old French oak barriques

Technical Analysis

14.0% alc/vol



Background

Shiraz, grenache and mourvedre have been the backbone of d'Arenberg's vineyards since the 1880's. These three are also the traditional red wine mainstays of the Rhône Valley in France, while the best whites are made from the trio of Viognier, Marsanne and Roussanne. It was not until 1995 that the plantings at the bottom of the vineyard known as 'The Last Ditch' were replaced with these, the first ever plantings of viognier, marsanne and roussanne in the district.

Tasting Notes

After excellent winter rains and then a warm, wet spring the vineyards were set for a good start to vintage. Flowering was consistent, for the first time crop sizes looked more normal than previous years. McLaren Vale experienced the coldest January for 12 years followed by a warm February with four very hot days which sped up the ripening for this and other earlier ripening varieties. This spike of heat was very welcome for the Viognier, as the success of this wine is put down to the evenness of the ripening period leading up to picking in the early autumn period which maximized fruit character and concentration of flavor.

Picked at a slightly higher Beaume to enhance the stonefruit characters, fermentation was long and moderately cool to retain fruit characters. Only free-run juice was used for the final wine and no induced malolactic fermentation was undertaken. Fermentation was undertaken in old French oak barriques and in stainless steel tanks. As with previous vintages of The Last Ditch, there is no obvious oak influence in this wine.

The 2004 release is a very youthful Viognier with a brilliant, mid-straw appearance with green tints. The lifted aroma of ginger, summer flowers, and tropical fruits is intertwined with the classic spectrums of nectarine, white peach and ripe apricot skin.

The palate is tight; initially dominated with cool mineral characters, and then you are hit with the tropical fruits, stonefruits and glycerol. Acidity is low but the palate is beautifully balanced, with a long-lasting, persistent finish. A medium weight wine offering a huge spectrum of characters, complexity and flavors. Drink now and over the next 3 to 4 years.

Additional Notes:

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