

La Chapelle

Grange

Bold and unique. Uniting winemaking cultures, spanning hemispheres and time. Fate. A longstanding friendship between two winemakers created an idea. The idea became a trial. The trial became a wine. And then there were three – 2021 (bottled), 2022 (bottled) and 2023 (in barrel). Who would have thought? Syrah from the legendary Hill of Hermitage, La Chapelle, coupled with Shiraz from esteemed South Australian vineyards, Grange. The blend's *raison d'être*: One variety – reunited, reinterpreted, reassembled.

"By uniting two iconic wines, this collaboration achieves something truly groundbreaking. As a vine grower, as a winemaker, it's so magical, I would have never even dared to imagine it. No one in the world has ever blended two such legendary terroirs. It's like Picasso and Dalí painting on the same canvas – an idea so extraordinary it almost feels too incredible to be real."

Caroline Frey, Winemaker La Chapelle.

"Via one variety this wine fuses two hemispheres and two winemaking cultures. France and South Australia, Syrah and Shiraz, La Chapelle and Grange.

Truly, a blend waiting to happen.

Emotionally, a wine beguilingly alluring.

Ultimately, harmony and classicism redefined."

Peter Gago, Chief Winemaker Grange.

GRAPE VARIETY

Shiraz

VINEYARD REGION

50% – 2021 La Chapelle, France, Hill of Hermitage, Rhône Valley.

50% – 2021 Grange, Australia, a collection of select South Australian vineyards (Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, Clare Valley).

WINE ANALYSIS

Alc/Vol: 14%, Acidity: 6.3 g/L, pH: 3.70

MATURATION

Oak? A quandary: Grange 100% new; La Chapelle 20% new. Already integrated, already sated. All assisted by a conveyance/continuum of fine tannins that are neither aggressive or dominant.

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

LA CHAPELLE 2021 VINTAGE

The 2021 vintage is unique in the context of climate change. The year started with a frost event; the Syrah was protected on the Hill of Hermitage with candles. Frequent rains followed until mid-July, requiring significantly more effort to protect the vineyard. From mid-July onwards, conditions became warmer and drier. These heavy rains resulted in juicier berries, compensated by performing saignées in tanks – removing some of the clear juice at the beginning of fermentation. This allowed restoration of the desired juice-to-skin ratio. A rare vintage.

GRANGE 2021 VINTAGE

South Australia enjoyed near-perfect conditions throughout the growing season. A wet August ensured vines were well set for Spring, with warm weather setting in during budburst and flowering. Summer was warm without any punishing heat waves. February and March were mild, allowing for an orderly harvest. Small parcels of grapes from the Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale and Clare Valley districts were earmarked for Grange, selected for their concentrated flavour, generous tannins and thick skins. Each parcel was individually fermented using heading down boards to fully submerge the skins during fermentation. A daily regime of rack & returns and careful monitoring of temperature ensured a desired extraction of colour, flavour and tannin – before the fermenting must was run off skins into new American oak hogsheads to complete fermentation. Ditto, selected pressings. Post Classification tastings and after a rigorous relegation of parcels, the blend was assembled to optimally reflect the aspirations of Grange style/quality/vintage.

COLOUR

Assured in the glass – bright, shimmering; dense core retaining purple hues on rim.

NOSE

Where to begin?

- Initially subtle and restrained, yet in no hurry to reveal a more lively, vivid and complex aromatic spectrum of quite some diversity/intensity.
- Rhubarb, blackberry and other black fruits immediately obvious
- Veering away from a meaty/jus first-impression – perhaps less *steak au poivre* than an amalgam of *régliasse* (licorice) and *poivre* (black pepper).
- Intriguingly, during a cross-hemisphere tasting/discussion of the blend's oak-derived aromatics (aka cedar and musk) an apt descriptor was unveiled – *patchouli* – a perfume that can unfold a rich sweetness, almost reminiscent of a damp sweet forest. A quick search reveals: 'Vetiver, pine, cypress and especially **cedarwood** capture **sandalwood's** distinct dry, early aromatics (often compared with patchouli which comes from the leaves of the patchouli plant)'. Apt indeed.
- Confident and complete, all is integrated and proudly flying a flag of *variety and style*, rather than *place and proprietor*.

PALATE

- Revealingly, an instant organoleptic conversion from the *unknown + uncertain to captivation + charm*. *Sans* skepticism!
- Medium-bodied. Balanced, with definition and poise. At once precise, measured.
- Currently a fleshy flavour amalgam of black cherry, pomegranate, wild raspberry and musk. When tasting one can only ponder what awaits with bottle age...
- Measured acidity + sapidity induces a crispness and liveliness. A good (savory) energy.
- Length, depth and width – structurally covering all bases. Indeed, from front to back palate – no gaps. Convincingly assured, graceful.
- Whilst tasting something never previously assembled, overheard: "A complete package – *Syrah/Shiraz* by any other name...!"

PEAK DRINKING

Conservatively, at least 25 years. Optimally, no doubt much longer...

LAST TASTED

September 2024.