

S.C. Pannell,

`Old McDonald` Blewitt Springs McLaren Vale Grenache 2019

McLaren Vale, South Australia, Australia



S.C. PANNELL
MCLAREN VALE



PRODUCER

In a very short space of time, Stephen Pannell has gone from being one of Australia's best and brightest young talents to one of their most lauded winemakers.

He is a two-time winner of the fabled Jimmy Watson Trophy, the most prestigious wine award in Australia, and also won the top prize at the Alternative Varietals Wine Show three out of the last five years. Stephen moved into his own McLaren Vale winery in 2014, and now owns 36 hectares of vineyard. This control over his fruit has enabled him to take quality to an even higher level.

One of the key factors behind his success is the freshness in all his wines, something he achieves by picking earlier. "I can only pick early due to better viticulture", he says. He is looking for the varietal 'stamp' rather than 'varietal character' in his wines, causing him to create blends such as the Grenache/Shiraz/Touriga, where the sum is greater than the parts. Because of this fresher 'stamp', he is also actively reducing oak influence in his wines by moving to larger, more neutral oak vessels.

VINEYARDS

Steve's interest in Grenache and desire to make medium-bodied styles stretches back to the mid 1990s when he first arrived in McLaren Vale. Given the warm, Mediterranean climate, Grenache grows as well in 'the Vale' as any of the more revered Grenache regions including France's Rhône Valley, Priorat in Spain and Italy's Sardinia. The grapes for this wine grow on 77 year old unirrigated vines in the Old McDonald vineyard in Blewitt Springs. Soils in this sub-region are sandy, with an underlying clay and ironstone base. The vines are south-east facing, in terraced contours and sit 80 metres above sea level.

VINTAGE

A winemaker's vintage with every scrap of experience tested and measured. Lower than average winter rainfall set up for a dry growing season, which resulted in dramatically reduced yields. Harvest took place on 22nd February and was quite early for the vineyard. In low yield years, acidity is generally good, and sets the resulting wines up for stability and long lives.

VINIFICATION

The hand-harvested grapes were traditionally vinified in small, open-top fermenters with 20% whole bunch. The wine spent 12 days on skins before gentle pressing. It was transferred to a 2,800 litre French oak vat for malolactic fermentation and maturation before being bottled in February 2020.

TASTING NOTES

Aromas of raspberry, five spice, toasted nuts and sweet summer tomatoes on the nose. Fresh raspberry, rosewater and orange zest are prominent on the palate and exotic spice flavours drive the finish. Medium-bodied, there is a dense core of fruit typical of the Old McDonald vineyard, supported by complex, persuasive tannins.

Grape Varieties	100% Grenache
Winemaker	Stephen Pannell
Closure	Screwcap
ABV	14%
Acidity	7.8g/L
Wine pH	3.42
Bottle Sizes	75cl
Notes	Vegetarian, Practising Organic, Vegan