

Charles Melton,

`Nine Popes` Barossa Valley 2019

Barossa Valley, South Australia, Australia



Grape Varieties	53% Grenache 47% Shiraz
Winemaker	Charlie & Sophie Melton
Closure	Stelvin Lux
ABV	14.5%
Acidity	6.6g/L
Wine pH	3.34
Bottle Sizes	75cl
Notes	Vegetarian, Vegan

PRODUCER

Charlie Melton was among the first to recognise the value and tradition of Barossa Valley's old-vine Grenache, Shiraz and Mourvèdre (Mataro). While others were grubbing up Shiraz to plant more fashionable varieties, Charlie and a small band of Barossa winemakers convinced farmers to keep their historic vineyards. Since 1984, Charlie has produced premium Barossa red wines. Initially styled on those from the Rhône, they are now considered leading examples in their own right. Charles Melton is a family project, and today his daughter Sophie, a talented young winemaker, assists Charlie in the winery.

VINEYARDS

The fruit for this wine is sourced from a selection of exceptional vineyards. The Grenache in this blend comes from old bush vines in the Barossa, many of which are over 80 years old, while the Shiraz is trellis grown. None of the vineyards are irrigated, they are all dry grown. This coupled with the low yielding old vines leads to great concentrations of flavour in the grapes.

VINTAGE

The 2019 vintage in the Barossa was characterised by dry conditions. The region experienced very little rainfall throughout the year leading up to harvest. While not particularly hot, the lack of rain resulted in significantly reduced crop levels, approximately 60% below 2018 and 70% below the average. The dry conditions allowed for optimal ripeness, with careful attention paid to picking times to avoid overripeness in the reds. Despite the challenging year, the resulting harvest was of great quality.

VINIFICATION

The 2019 Nine Popes is based on dry-farmed, old vine bush Grenache. The Grenache is co-fermented with Shiraz, along with some single-varietal fermentation. A combination of whole bunch, destemmed, and uncrushed fruit is used, along with a small portion of carbonic maceration Grenache. Fermentation is conducted in cool temperatures, with gentle cap management, including hand plunging. The wine is pressed to barrique (predominantly French) and undergoes malolactic fermentation in oak. The wine then spends 24-27 months on lees before settling and bottling.

TASTING NOTES

This wine displays a lovely deep ruby colour with a bright crimson edge. The nose opens with a prominent spicy liquorice, supported by sweet perfume and spice. The palate offers savoury flavours and hints of anise, leading into a plush, rounded structure. An excellent volume of tannins promises long ageing potential.

AWARDS

International Wine Challenge 2023, Silver