

S.C. Pannell,

`Little Branch` Blewitt Springs McLaren Vale Grenache 2023

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 times. 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". As with all his wine projects, Stephen's winemaking philosophy remains steadfast: fruit grown in the right place with considerable attention in the vineyard requires minimal intervention in the winery.

VINEYARDS

Fruit is sourced from the Little Branch vineyard, purchased by Stephen and Fiona in 2021. Located in Blewitt Springs, Little Branch is north/northwest facing and sits at an elevation of 140 metres. The 30-year-old unirrigated, trellised vines are grown in 50-million-year-old soils comprised of Maslin Beach sands, flecked with ironstone and on a limestone bedrock.

VINTAGE

The third year of the current La Nina cycle was cool and wet which resulted in the most challenging vintage in decades. High winter rainfall continued through spring which delayed budburst and shoot growth. Thankfully, a dry mild summer followed, but the harvest remained the latest on record. The long hang time and reduced yields did however result in elegance and great flavour. The 2023 vintage was a year that relied on attention to detail in the vineyard to make great wine.

VINIFICATION

The fruit was hand picked on 18th March and immediately destemmed with 14% being left as whole bunches. It was then carefully fermented in stainless steel with daily pump overs before being left on skins for 10 days before pressing. It was settled in tank for 12 days before transfer to old French oak vats for malolactic fermentation and extended maturation. The wine was bottled without fining on the 20th September 2024.

TASTING NOTES

On the nose there are rich red fruit notes of raspberry compote, maraschino cherries, and pomegranate, underpinned by clove, black tea and liquorice. The palate is soft and inviting with fine tannins with red fruit flavours and a tremendously long finish.

Grape Varieties	100% Grenache
Winemaker	Stephen Pannell
Closure	Screwcap
ABV	14%
Acidity	5.4g/L
Wine pH	3.49
Bottle Sizes	75cl
Notes	Vegetarian, Vegan