2017 ST IGNATIUS

Relative to past years, the 2017 St Ignatius justified a higher than usual percentage of Merlot. Merlot’s mid-palate sweetness comes through on this wine, superbly balancing the edginess of Cabernet in a cool year. The aroma is complex and ethereal with a host of flavours vying for dominance – violets, plum, blackberry, cedar, herb and sarsaparilla! The palate is silky. Sweet plum fruit on the middle finishing with dark blackberry and chocolate. Fine tannins wrap everything up and leave the palate fresh.

Vines

Each variety brings unique flavours and the blend leads to a wine of great complexity. Cabernet Sauvignon yields intense red berry character and firm tannins. Merlot shows violet perfume and has silky tannins that build a bridge to the tannin of Cabernet Sauvignon. Malbec brings deep colour and plum-like flavour, while Cabernet Franc has pronounced aromas of raspberries, blackcurrants and violets. The varieties are suited to Sevenhill’s cooler, later-ripening conditions. Vineyard management also contributes to low vigour in the vines and modest yields, ensuring a wine of impressive concentration.

Vintage

The March start to the Clare Valley’s 2017 vintage was reminiscent of bygone seasons, with some old hands recalling “how it used to be” before a changing climate pushed the first pick of harvest into early February. While ample rain in the winter and spring of 2016 laid a foundation for optimism, cooler temperatures in January and rain towards the end of the month slowed ripening in South Australia’s wine regions. A burst of hot weather in early February triggered some movement and crops began to ripen at a more normal pace in the kinder conditions.

Winemaking

The 2017 St Ignatius is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (54%), Merlot (34%), Malbec (8%) and Cabernet Franc (5%). All four varieties are crushed into open slate fermenters where they stay on skins for 12-14 days, with gentle hand plunging three times a day. After basket pressing, ageing was undertaken in a combination of old and new French oak.

Bottled: February 2019  
Alcohol: 15.5%  
Standard drinks: 9.2

Acidity: 6.1 g/L  
pH: 3.65  
Residual sugar: 0.8 g/L