



2010 Wirra Wirra Original Blend puts grenache up in lights

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Murmurs of a grenache resurgence in McLaren Vale have been gathering steam over the past few years with some stunning examples of the variety on offer from both well-established producers and cutting edge newcomers. Naturally, Wirra Wirra has been in the midst of it all with its Original Blend Grenache Shiraz and plans to release a super-premium straight grenache from a couple of McLaren Vale's oldest vineyards later in 2011.

But for now we make do with the 2010 Wirra Wirra Original Blend, a medium-bodied, food-friendly wine released in perfect time to enjoy as the weather cools.

Wirra Wirra Winemaker Paul Smith said the tribe at Wirra Wirra were rapt with the 2010 release and felt it was a preview of things to come for its other signature reds, the Catapult Shiraz, Woodhenge Shiraz and Church Block Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz Merlot all to be released later this year from what looks like being a classic vintage.

"This year we have actually increased the amount of shiraz in the blend to 30 per cent but the grenache is undisputedly the star of the show," says Paul.

"The grenache creates a beautiful wine to enjoy with food, and the shiraz provides the right amount of spice and perfume but doesn't dominate the performance of the grenache."

The 2010 Original Blend is a perfect match with some pan-fried whole sardines drizzled with verjuice, or a big bowl of osso bucco with gremolata.

The Original Blend has a long history at Wirra Wirra as it is the true godfather to Church Block. In fact, as the name suggests, it was the "original blend" used for Church Block in 1972. After Greg Trott introduced the grenache shiraz Church Block to the wider world, the advice came through from no less a wine authority than Brian Croser that the Church Block blend should draw its inspiration from the "Old World" and so it became a unique blend of the Bordeaux favourites cabernet sauvignon and merlot, with a distinct Aussie backbone of McLaren Vale shiraz. The rest, as they say, is history.

However, people were still eager to have a wine produced "like the old Church Block" and so in the early 90s the grenache shiraz blend had a comeback as none other than the Original Blend. At the turn of the century Original Blend took another hiatus as grenache fell out of favour but once again it has triumphed and is now in its third vintage having been reintroduced again after the 2008 season.

The 2010 vintage has strong flavours of stewed rhubarb and bright raspberry fruit that are balanced by vibrant acidity and a seamless fusion of natural tannin and oak maturation character. The wine was matured in three and four year old French oak puncheons. While attractive and easy to drink now, the grenache will help it to age beautifully and it will continue to develop for the next six to ten years.

2010 Wirra Wirra Original Blend – RRP \$24.00 (available through cellar door and on-premise only)

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