



### Vintage of the Decade?

A bold statement? Perhaps, but Wirra Wirra Senior Winemaker Paul Smith, reckons 2010 has produced the best quality fruit in South Australia since 2002.

"It's a big call, but I'm willing to put it out there. The fruit from this year is just so vibrant and the fruit flavours are really fresh and lively. We're going to see some great wine come out of Wirra Wirra this year," says Smith.

Smith puts it down to two key rain events in February and March that refreshed the vines and built lush and healthy canopies that protected the fruit from the summer sun. This in turn extended the ripening period and enabled the vines to create good, naturally balanced fruit with intense flavour.

Complementing this were the mild climate conditions during harvest which meant that each block of fruit could be picked individually. Unlike recent years when South Australia has been subject to intense heat during harvest, the Wirra Wirra team had the luxury of a bit more time to test the fruit every day and pick each parcel separately and at optimum ripeness.

Of the reds, shiraz has proved to be a standout. It is a variety that Wirra Wirra is known to produce very well and 2010 will be no exception. The depth and vibrancy of the 2010 shiraz is incredibly strong. Cabernet sauvignon has been sourced from 40-45 year old vines and some parcels of grenache come from 80, 90 and 100 year old vines. Both varieties are also looking excellent this year.

The premium parcels of shiraz, and cabernet that are destined for Wirra Wirra's flagship wines, RSW and The Angelus, have been fermented in two-tonne open fermenters. Paul and his fellow Winemaker, Paul Carpenter have invested much time, labour and love into these wines by regularly hand-plunging, stirring, observing and tasting the wine.

Smith is pleased with the ferment process of the 2010 vintage across all varieties. The sugar balance in the fruit has enabled the ferments to finish completely and cleanly. The Wirra Wirra whites are also in great shape and chardonnay especially is displaying natural style and class, with a good balance of flavour intensity and acid.

Fruit provided by South Australian growers to Wirra Wirra has been optimal. Paul enjoys a very hands-on role with the growers that provide Wirra Wirra with some of the fruit for their wines each year. He spends a lot of time with them, tasting the fruit and communicating about the quality level of various blocks. This helps Paul and Wirra Wirra viticulturalist, Kevin Fiddaman, decide the perfect time to have the fruit picked and transferred to the winery to be pressed.

"We have excellent relationships with our growers and I think that has an impact on the quality of fruit we buy from them. They understand that we have a very small window of opportunity to decide when the fruit has reached its peak and when we should get it off the vines and to the winery. This year, this process worked like a dream and we are already noticing the results," Smith says.

Of the quality lift in their own vines, the Wirra Wirra team believe they are beginning to reap the benefits of three years of biodynamic practice in the vineyards.

Smith has embraced the spirit of the late Greg Trott, the inspiring force behind Wirra Wirra. Trott's philosophy was to take your task in life seriously but have fun at the same time. Smith knows that his task in life is to make exceptional wine but he also makes time to enjoy the job at hand and his team. "It's easy to be swept up in the business of harvest time and making wine but we make sure that we also make time for each other. We stop to enjoy lunch together and we're always willing to share a joke. Often it's when we relax that we have our best ideas and discover ways to further improve our wines," says Smith.



Consumers will not have to wait long to sample the 2010 Wirra Wirra vintage with the Adelaide Hills whites leading the way. The Lost Watch Riesling is expected to hit shelves nationally in August followed closely by the Hiding Champion Sauvignon Blanc. Reds are currently maturing at the winery with some varieties likely be released late next year.

For more information about Wirra Wirra wines visit: [www.wirrawirra.com](http://www.wirrawirra.com)

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