



PETALUMA COONAWARRA 2008

Although the winter of 2007 was drier than usual, we received wonderful soaking spring and early summer rain in our Evans Vineyard in Coonawarra. The growing season was also pretty cool, the vineyard receiving 1503° C days of heat, slightly more than the long term average of 1414° C days. Happily, after the rigours of the very frosty lead up to the 2007 vintage, we had no significant frosts in Coonawarra in the growing season. The ripening months of February and March were quite cool, and the old vines ripened their meagre crop in mid-March.

We hand picked all our fruit, taking the Merlot on the 13th and 14th, Shiraz on the 17th and Cabernet Sauvignon from the 18th to the 20th of March. The pristine whole bunches were then trucked to our winery in the Piccadilly Valley, destemmed, crushed and chilled into a combination of Potter heading –down-board fermenters and 1.5 tonne open fermenters. The cold must was then inoculated with Petaluma's chosen yeast strain to encourage primary fermentation after 3 to 4 days cold soaking. The Potter fermenters were racked and returned once per day, that is, the fermenting juice is drained away from the skins to another tank and then pumped back up, refloating the "cap". This helps colour and tannin extraction and is quite gentle.

The open fermenters are hand plunged twice per day, ensuring the floating cap does not dry out. The alcoholic fermentation lasted up to 15 days and the wines were left on skins for a further few days to help tannin extraction, aroma flavour complexity.

The sugar dry wine was then drained off, the skins gently pressed and the blended wine gravity fed to barrel after settling for 24 hours. Malo-lactic fermentation was encouraged in barrique using chosen native bacteria. At the completion of malo, the wine was racked out of oak, analysis checked and sulphur dioxide added before being returned to barrel.

At Petaluma our favoured cooper is Dargaud et Jaegle, based in Burgundy, and our Coonawarra reds are all matured in French oak barriques from the forests of Alliers and Nevers. These forests produce very fine grain oak, ideal for fine reds from Coonawarra. The individual batches were blended after 20 months in barrique, egg white fined and then gently filtered to bottle, in February 2010.

The 2008 Petaluma Coonawarra is once again a blend of predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon(60%) and Merlot(31%), with Shiraz(9%) making up the balance.

Typically elegant Coonawarra Cabernet Merlot in style, the Shiraz adds a lovely sweet supple middle, important in a wine so young. Deep intense colour with soft, sandy abundant tannin, the 2008 Petaluma Coonawarra is a big brooding dry red, and ranks amongst the best vintages in Coonawarra. While the wine is soft and approachable now, it really deserves very long term cellaring to allow the underlying cedar and spice to fully develop. A vintage to keep!



WINEMAKER
Andrew Hardy