

CLONAKILLA SYRAH

Clonakilla Syrah tends to play second fiddle to the Shiraz Viognier, but, in reality, it's not a "second" wine. It's a very different expression of shiraz from the Clonakilla estate. For a start, there's no viognier and no whole-bunch. Whole grapes go into the fermentation vats, and they're gently crushed during the ferment. Skin contact has increased from three weeks in 2006 to 4-4½ weeks now.

The Wines

2015 The alluring, perfumed dark cherry is more reminiscent of the Côte d'Or than Côte-Rôtie, although there's a suggestion of black pepper. This is an opulent, very fine red that is totally seductive.

★★★★★

2014 Never released. About 100 bottles made. Slightly advanced colour. The nose shows premature maturity and complex undergrowth notes together with white and black pepper. The palate is gentle - just a little light in the middle. Pleasant now, and will be for some time. ★★★☆

2013 A glorious nose, offering black truffle, dried herbs, perfumed dark cherry, and a hint of grilled meat à la Northern Rhône. Lovely rich palate with perfectly balanced tannins. A delight to drink, but there's no doubt that it will reward cellaring. ★★★☆

2012 Superb dark cherry, violets and prominent black pepper provide a classic cool region shiraz experience. The palate is stunningly long and fine, bringing to mind the best of Côte-Rôtie. It's very difficult to resist now, but try to keep it for at least a few years. ★★★★★

2010 Slightly developed colour. The nose shows undergrowth and leathery complex, mature notes. It's comparatively firm, with powdery tannins, and is not as generously flavoured as the best vintages. ★★★☆

2009 A picture of power, freshness and refinement. The aroma reflects dark cherry confiture in the best way, in that it is fragrant, certainly not jammy. The palate offers richness, depth, fine, firm tannins and layers of flavour. A wine for the ages. ★★★★★

2008 Aromas of rose petals and dark berries with the first hint of leathery maturity. The palate is vibrant, belying the nose, but the tannins are fairly firm, and there's a slight hollowness. ★★★☆

2006 A nose of freshness plus maturity, with classic cool area aromas. It's drinking very well indeed, offering delicious varietal fruit backed up by fine tannins, and will evolve further. ★★★★★

At their best, these wines are thrilling, challenging the best of the Northern Rhône. Go to <http://www.clonakilla.com.au/> for more information.

Lester Jesberg

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