

2019 SYRAHMI HOME BLOCK

The Home Block High Density Vineyard sits at 400m elevation in a natural, north-facing amphitheatre next to our home in Tooborac. We noticed the site's potential in 2015, and then after much planning, in 2017, we planted three shiraz clones – PT10, 2626 and Mt Langi – from east to west across 0.35 hectares. With only 75cm between each vine and 1.45m rows in between, the Home Block High Density Vineyard is currently the most southerly, high altitude and densely planted vineyard in the Heathcote region.

All vines are on their own rootstock in decomposed granite soil with no clay, and a light 15-30cm of topsoil. The giant granite boulders that surround the vineyard are a stunning allusion to the 380 million years of erosion that gave us the decomposed granite we find in the vineyard; the soil you see on the front of our Syrahmi Home Block High Density Shiraz wine bottles.

Throughout the year we tend the vines by hand, which gives us a close understanding of what's happening in the vineyard. We use organic practices and the Poussard pruning method to lower the risk of disease pressure, a concern that is further eased by the decision to cordon canes at one metre, which helps to create better airflow. Cordoning in this way also helps to protect both vines and fruit from reflected heat from the earth, while a zero till policy helps prevent soil erosion, in turn promoting biodiversity and vine health.

The vineyard's orientation is inspired by our family home, which we noticed received generous sunshine in the cooler months, and ample shade in the summertime. Both our home and the Syrahmi Home Block High Density Vineyard face six degrees south of west, which encourages even ripening and helps to protect the vines from harsh winds and direct sunlight. As the Australian climate continues to change, the vineyard aspect is critical in helping us extend the ripening period – for greater concentration and complexity – without increasing the alcohol of the final wine. While we harvested other grapes around the Heathcote region throughout March, the PT10 clone was picked on the 11th of April, and the 2626 clone nearly a week later on the 16th and 17th.

VINEYARD

Syrahmi Home Block - High Density Vineyard

Town: Tooborac
Region: Heathcote
Planted: In 2017 on own roots
Area: 0.35Ha
Clone: PT10, 2626 & Mt Langi
(Mt Langi not picked in 2019, fruit was dropped to promote better growth)
Aspect: East to West
Soils: 360-million-year-old granite from the Devonian Perio
Altitude: 400m



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TASTING NOTES

First release from Foster's own tiny, close-planted shiraz vineyard, from a low-yielding vintage. Wild black hedgerow fruit flavours underpinned by earthy, granite-sandy tannins. Max Allen – Australian Financial Review Magazine

Unequivocally among the most beautiful wines tasted from Australia, this is an exemplar of bright, exquisitely perfumed judiciously weighted Syrah. A wine that we should be proud of, at least those of us who consider Northern Rhône luminaries such as Jamet, Jasmin, Trolat and more recently, Gonon, as the inspirational pantheon. Sitting pretty, fresh and so bright in the mouth, inflections of lilac, iodine, blueberry, charcuterie and tapenade are pulled long and savoury by a chainmail of impeccably wrought tannins and juicy acidity. Nothing tiring here. To think that this is an inaugural release! From a densely planted vineyard on granite, replete with boulders aplenty, mostly facing south-west. I got goosebumps from the first whiff, an event that occurs so seldom that I recognised immediately a wine of place stamped with considerable pedigree. Thank you. To score is senseless. But to bring a wine so beautiful to the attention of those who listen, is an imperative. So, if I must... 98 - Ned Goodwin MW

Ageing: 20+ years

WINE ANALYSIS

Alc/Vol: 13.2% Acidity: 6.20 PH: 3.68

VINTAGE CONDITIONS

The dry winter of 2018 forced an early spring, and the buds were bursting earlier than usual. A good amount of welcome rain followed in mid spring encouraging rapid but balanced growth. The hot spell early in the year accelerated ripening, but the balance of cool Heathcote nights and hot days made for exceptional growing conditions for Shiraz. It was a vintage that truly defied the conditions.

WINEMAKING

Fruit: 50% whole bunch, wild yeast fermentation and malolactic fermentation.

Fermentation: Open fermenter, gentle foot stomping and hand plunging. No pumping over. 22-27 days on skins before pressing.

Maturation: 675L flow form ceramic egg. Wine is left on lees without racking for two years, then bottled unfiltered & unfiltered with min. SO2 to age for a further 3 years in bottle.

Yeast: Wild yeast

Filtration: None

Fining: None



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