



Sami-Odi 'DW-OLD'

Barossa Valley - Australia 2013

A lot of truly spectacular wines have emerged from the Barossa Valley. However, more recently there has been one man who is doing his own thing, pushing for ever-more pure and balanced wines: Fraser McKinley. His experience working with the Standish Wine Company and Torbreck Vintners, gave him the tools to embark on a new endeavor in 2006; a small winery, that goes by the curious name of Sami-Odi. He produces minuscule quantities of Syrah of the highest order. McKinley's motivation is to make wines that don't have acid additions, with a very steady eye on picking based on pH, 'this is so much more important for me, and it's based on a stylistic choice. pH for me is the most important part - it gives me a rough idea where I will end up,' says McKinley. The wines are picked earlier than most in the Barossa, generally in February, which sounds extraordinary, but it seems to work from this site.

'The older vines certainly aren't always the superior parcel', says winemaker Fraser McKinley, 'for me it's always about where the various parcels fit in'. The 2013 vintage was pretty harsh out at the Hoffman vineyard, the worst in living memory (records back to mid 1800s) for frost. Then came 2014... But in 2013, almost everything was in its growth phase, then got smashed by frost, turned black and started falling off the vines. The vines fruited again, 'a second crop, a scattered amount of grape bunches, some set on feeble stems, some decentish looking, the yields if you were a Hoffman sucked terribly', explains McKinley.

In 2013, yields were between .5 and 1.2 tons per acre, 'but with fruit set and vagaries of the vintage, there's questions marks over quality whenever yields come about so low', says McKinley, 'you're constantly learning about what you're doing; interesting for my tastes though, that things kind of thrive for my tastes, in those tougher years'. DW-Old is the name of the only 2013 release from Sami Odi, named for the block code of the Hoffman vineyard.

All the old vines that McKinley accesses went into this wine - the name DW is for the Dallwitz family, from whom the Hoffman's bought this vineyard off in 1940. The 29 rows are 97 plants per row, and planted somewhere in the between 1888 and 1912. Whole bunch, pigeage, gentle maceration and natural carbonic maceration with just a tiny bit of sulfur is the standard 'recipe' of sorts.

Composition

100% Syrah

Soil Type

Fractured Red Clay & Ironstone

Vine Age

111 years old

Élevage

12 months in 20% new French barrique

Yields

Average .9 tons per acre

Production

256 cases

Tasting Notes

“ Slick and potent, a tour-de-force of warm, rich, dense fruit but with a spice, lift, drive and vigor that sets the wine apart. A black hole, with coursing energy. Smells like wet earth, treacle, dark berries, clove-and-cinnamon and dried fruits, but there's a floral lift too. Flavors are dark fruit, compact, trimmed with cedary tannin and crunchy acidity, sitting flush against every corner of the palate, but without being bombastic at the same time. ”

Reviews

The Wine Front (Mike Bennie) | 94+ points