



Sami-Odi 'Little Wine #5'

Barossa Valley - Australia MV

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 grapes are hand sorted enduring their primary fermentation at whatever pace the season dictates, without the use of de-stemming, pumps, yeasts, enzymes or temperature control. The whole clusters are gently pigeaged by foot prior to basket pressing into Burgundian Pièces where they complete both their primary and malolactic fermentations. To encourage the retention of naturally occurring carbon dioxide (a by-product of fermentation and a natural preservative and antioxidant) the wines are not racked or clarified during their élevage and remain on their lees until they are assembled.

This is a blend of 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, another season in the wine known as Little Wine, with another season physically in this release too. "It's just an interesting thing for me to do for my sake", says winemaker Fraser McKinley. There are 16 barriques used for this wine this release, two of the barrels are from 2012 and one from 2013, so the bulk of the wine is from younger wine from 2014 and 2015. "I like youth and snap and crunch, so it's quite nice to see that as the dominant part, and the older wines foiled by the younger."

In terms of flavor, Fraser has a different take on the non-vintage blend versus making a single vintage wine from various parcels, "I've never really been about sum of parts, I just like best barrels and that they go together. The older barrels give the wine depth, not that I am looking for that or palate weight. The wine has become, for better or worse, a more structural wine these days, not quite as loose as it used to be, not all flesh."

Composition

100% Syrah

Soil Type

Fractured Red Clay & Ironstone

Vine Age

Varied: Average 65 years old

Élevage

Average 16 months in French barrique (20% new)

Yields

Average 1 ton per acre

Production

412 cases

Tasting Notes

“Lovely spice notes in the bouquet, clove, pepper, cedary notes, old leather, tobacco, then dark fruits, anise, plums. Lots going on between brooding fruit and savoriness. Tight tannins and crisp acidity keep the wine in check. It's juicy, but crunchy-textured, very long in flavor, spicy, moody with blue and black berry fruit feel. It's got a lot more structure than previous incarnations.”

Reviews

The Wine Front (Mike Bennie) | 94 points

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