

# **HENSCHKE** *exceptional wines from outstanding vineyards*

## **HENSCHKE VINEYARD FOCUS - Prue Henschke**

### **PART I: HILL OF GRACE VINEYARD**

Hill of Grace: this surely is one of the most evocative phrases in the world of wine. It is a translation from the German 'Gnadenberg', a region in Silesia, and the name given to the lovely Lutheran Church across the road. For Henschke it is the name of both the vineyard and the wine that has so captured the heart of the red wine lover. The eight-hectare vineyard on the original 32-hectare block sits at an altitude of 400 metres, and has an average rainfall of 520 millimetres. It is situated at Parrot Hill, an isolated spot that was once an active village.

#### **Vineyard Technical Information- HILL OF GRACE**

: Eden Valley wine region, 4 km north-west of Henschke Cellars at Keyneton, in the Barossa Range, South Australia.

: Shiraz (on own roots). Vines originate from pre-phyloxera material brought from Europe by the early European settlers. Riesling and semillon.

: Shiraz - individual vineyard bottling since 1958.

: Oldest vines planted in 1860s.

: 5 tonnes/hectare (2 tonnes/acre)

: Alluvial, sandy loam over clay.

: 2 wire vertical/single wire at 70 centimetres.

: Wide planting - 3.1 metres x 3.7 metres. Most are planted east-west, some north-south. Dry grown.

: Tilled and dodged for many years without herbicide. Only copper and sulphur used for foliage sprays. Now mulched and grassed down. Fungus problems are minimal - vineyard can be considered 'organic'.

: Mass selection carried out over two growing seasons. Establishment of a mother source block.

: 520 mm

: 400 metres

: 34° 30'

: 139° 07'

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**HISTORY:** The land was originally granted to Charles Flaxman by land grant in 1842 for £1 per acre. It was then sold by George Fife Angus to Nicolaus Stanitzki in 1873, for £480. Following his death the property was transferred to his son Carl August Stanitzki in 1879, who later sold the vineyard and moved from the district. Paul Gotthard Henschke purchased the vineyard in 1891. After his death his sons and executors Paul Alfred and Julius Philip Henschke arranged the transfer to Julius Philip, who had married Ida Maria Magdalena Stanitzki, a daughter of Pauline and Anton Stanitzki (brother to Carl August Stanitzki). On Julius Philip's death in 1928 the property transferred to his wife.

In 1951 the property was purchased by Louis Edmund Henschke, a son of Paul Alfred Henschke, who worked the vineyard and property for nearly 40 years. The family continues to maintain the heritage.

**VARIETIES:** The vineyard is planted predominantly to shiraz, but a surprise to many is that it also includes other varieties: riesling, semillon and mataro (mourvèdre), with sercial now only a distant memory. But this planting of several varieties in the 'garden' as the old Barossan growers called their vineyard, is typical - a sort of hedging their bets against the vagaries of Mother Nature. The whites are used in Eden Valley varieties, and the mataro...well, that's one of Mother Nature's later maturing varieties. It has gone into Hill of Grace at times, but usually it just doesn't ripen enough.

**The Grandfathers**, as the oldest block is called, was planted by Nicolaus Stanitzki around the 1860s. These vines are planted on their own roots from pre-phylloxera material brought from Europe by the early settlers. The sturdy, gnarled vines are dry grown and yield an average two tonnes to the acre (five tonnes to the hectare). The shiraz vines are planted on a wide spacing of 3.1 metres between vines and 3.4 metres between rows. The one-metre trellis consists of two wires which carry two to three arched canes with a bud number of around 40 to 50. The foliage is allowed to hang down to form a drooping canopy, which helps to reduce shoot vigour. However in wetter years, the shoot tips are trimmed before veraison on the blocks showing most vigour - the Grandfathers, and **Post Office Blocks One and Two**.

The mataro is grown as bush vines, which suits the upright growth of this variety. The whites are planted closer together than the reds, down to 2.2 metres, and have the regular 3.4 metres between rows to suit the old tractor widths.

Originally the ground was cultivated and the vines were 'dodged off' in spring and 'hilled on' again in early summer for weed control. Nowadays the vineyard has a permanent sod culture of early-maturing perennial rye grass in the row, which is mowed down low. The vines are no longer dodged and a mulch of wheat straw is used under the vines to retain soil moisture, build up organic matter, and inhibit weed growth. Prediction of disease pressure through an integrated pest management program is a strong part of Henschke's viticultural management, resulting in minimal chemical input in the vineyard. Herbicides are used only when the season calls for dense weed or sod control, and, as the risk of mildew is low, fungicides used are copper and sulphur, which are accepted as organic. Yield estimates are carried out in early summer, and cropping levels are kept in check by bunch thinning at veraison.

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The grapes are picked early to mid April at a sugar level of around 24°Brix. There is always a good acid/pH balance from this vineyard. The anthocyanins (colour pigments) in the berries are also very high, which perhaps offers a clue to the very high quality of the Hill of Grace shiraz.

**CLONAL SELECTION PROGRAM:** Henschke viticulturist Prue Henschke (who has a Bachelor of Science in Botany and Zoology and studied with Stephen at Geisenheim) has often likened the Grandfathers to old soldiers. This was the catalyst for a clonal selection program, begun in 1986, to identify the best vines to propagate.

Prue and her assistant Uschi (Ursula Linssen), who also studied at Geisenheim, literally walked the rows together, earmarking potential vines. They took a scientific approach, using criteria such as even budburst and the absence of eutypa, a wood-rotting fungus that wasn't the problem they had imagined. Then they moved through to flowering to look at bunch numbers per shoot, the evenness of flowering and veraison, virus, and finally the fruit itself. What was the bunch composition and bunch structure? How did sugar, pH and acid stack up? And all this was after they had already eliminated vines they didn't deem suitable! It is painstaking work, slotted in with the Mount Edelstone selection. Prue says it will be at least a 20-year program over four selections.

At the same time, Louis Henschke did his own selection. While he never really discussed his criteria in depth, he chose what he thought were good, well-balanced vines based on his experience as a grower.

Cuttings from the selected vines, dubbed Uschi's Selection and Uncle Lou's Selection, were planted in the nursery vineyard to allow for further research. Since 1994 cuttings have been taken from the nursery, propagated, and replanted as needed on the Hill of Grace vineyard to replace old vines that have expired.

**6 HILL OF GRACE VINEYARD BLOCKS:** Apart from the **Grandfathers**, there are **Post Office Blocks One and Two**, the **Post Office Block Young** which is made up of the younger selected material located near the vines of the old post office, and the **Church Block, House Block** and **Windmill Block**.

Fruit is picked at different times according to ripeness and maturity then made as individual lots. Keeping the blocks separate allows for variations of soil types, vigour and age of the vines - all of which produce different flavours that become, if you like, a part of the complete wine.

For example in some years the Grandfathers, because they are in very deep soil, can have quite big bunches and big berries due to moisture retention of the soil, whereas the House Block bunches can be rather small and the berries tiny. This block can be picked anywhere from one to three weeks earlier than the Grandfathers, yet have greater concentration and colour intensity. Segregation of the fruit from picking to the final blending allows for the ultimate in site selection.



## HENSCHKE VINEYARD FOCUS - Prue Henschke

**SOIL COMPOSITION:** Located four kilometres north-west of Henschke Cellars, the vineyard is located on a unique part of the Moculta landscape where gentle protected slopes nestle against the rocky Boundary Road ridge to the east. Soils on these slopes are thick, red clay-rich loams overlain by a 20- to 25-centimetre thick veneer of brown, fine, sandy to silty loam; near Duck Ponds Creek, there is an additional layer of alluvial silty loam. Grandfathers and Post Office Block One vines, in the western parts of the vineyard, are on these soils, which have good moisture holding capacity down to over one and a half metres.

On the House Block, in the eastern part of the vineyard, the red clay soil is thinner, and is overlain first by a two- to three-centimetre thick layer of gravel wash from the hill to the east, then by a layer of the same fine sandy to silty loam found in the western parts of the vineyard. Soil profiles in the rest of the vineyard grade between these two types.

Rocks beneath the red clay soils are schists of Cambrian (about 540 million years) age. These are metamorphosed mineral-rich sediments, originally deposited in a shallow sea, then deeply buried, and finally pushed back up to the surface where they weathered to produce a thick soil layer. The thin gravel layer beneath the House Block is one of the clues that the upper 'veneer' of sandy to silty loam is made up mostly of fine sand and clay blown in from the west during a more recent interglacial period - either about 18,000 to 25,000 years ago, or possibly about 135,000 years ago - when the region was very dry and cold.

By its presence, this layer tells us that the rich red soils of the Hill of Grace vineyard have remained undisturbed in this protected little pocket ever since that time. It's just one of those nice little accidents of nature!

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## **HENSCHKE VINEYARD FOCUS - Prue Henschke**

### **PART II: MOUNT EDELSTONE VINEYARD**

#### Vineyard Technical Information - MOUNT EDELSTONE

- : Eden Valley wine region, 4 km north-west of Keyneton in the Barossa Range of SA.
- : Shiraz, on own roots, dry grown
- : Individual vineyard bottling since early 1950s.
- : Planted in 1912
- : 6 tonnes/hectare (2.5 tonnes/acre)
- : Deep sandy loam, over red clay loam, overlying laminated siltstone.
- : Five trellis types - Twin Wire Vertical, Vertical Shoot Positioned, High Single Wire, Scott Henry System and Smart Dyson.
- : Wide planting - 3.7 m x 3.7 m giving 783 vines/hectare. Rows are planted east-west. Dry grown.
- : The vines are mulched with wheat straw with a permanent sward of grass in the row, so herbiciding and working the soil are techniques no longer used.
- : Mass selection carried out over three growing seasons. Establishment of a nursery source block. Assessment of trellis systems and use of rootstock.
- : Average annual, 600 mm.
- : 400 metres
- : 34° 32'
- : 139° 06'
- : Easterly
- : 16 hectares (40 acres)
- : National wine show awards for every vintage since first shown in 1956.



## HENSCHKE VINEYARD FOCUS - Prue Henschke

**HISTORY:** The beautiful and historical name Mount Edelstone is a translation from the German 'Edelstein' as 'gemstone'. In 1839 Johann Menge, a German geologist, mineralogist and gardener explored and surveyed the regions around Adelaide in the new free colony of South Australia, on behalf of George Fife Angas and Colonel William Light. He travelled through the Barossa Range and named rivers and hills including Mount Edelstein, which with time was anglicised to Mount Edelstone.

This land was granted to George Fife Angas shortly afterwards, together with large tracts of land in the most fertile region along the North Para River in the Barossa Range. The land passed to his great-grandson Ronald Angas who in 1912 established a large orchard and vineyard on the eastern slope of Mount Edelstone near his homestead Hutton Vale.

The 40-acre vineyard, situated in the Eden Valley wine region, was planted to shiraz, probably sourced from Joseph Gilbert at Pewsey Vale. The original pre-phylloxera material most likely originated from the James Busby selection, which was propagated by Samuel Smith of Yalumba in the 1850s. What is surprising about Mount Edelstone is that it was planted purely as a shiraz vineyard. Prue has found, however, 10 rogue vines of bastardo.

Cyril Henschke contracted the grapes from Colin Angas, the son of Ronald Angas, from the early 1950s. The first Mount Edelstone bottled as an individual vineyard wine was the 1952 vintage. It was simply labelled as Mount Edelstone Claret bottled by C.A. Henschke & Co., North Rhine Winery, Keyneton, South Australia. The back label read, "This wine is made from shiraz grapes grown at Mount Edelstone Vineyard, Keyneton." The 1956 vintage won First Prize in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne. It literally stormed the national wine show scene and announced its formidable presence at the forefront of the pioneering days of Australian red wine. When Cyril purchased the vineyard from Colin Angas in 1974, Mount Edelstone was already well entrenched as one of Australia's greatest shiraz wines.

### **Roots/Trellising/Trials**

The vines are planted on their own roots, are dry grown and yield an average of 2.5 tonnes to the acre (6 tonnes per hectare). The vines are planted on a wide spacing of 3.7 metres between vines and 3.7 metres between rows. The original one-metre trellis consists of two wires which carry two to three arched canes with a bud number of around 50 to 60. The foliage is allowed to hang down to form a drooping canopy, which helps to reduce shoot vigour.

In 1989 Prue trialled 10 rows of Scott Henry in which the shoots from the top wire canes are trained upwards between foliage wires and the shoots from the bottom wire canes are trained downwards between foliage wires. The effect of this solar panel system is to provide a significant increase in exposure of the leaves and fruit to the sun, thereby increasing fruitfulness and promoting earlier ripening and a greater increase in colour and flavour of the fruit. This trellis has had such a positive impact on the quality of the wine that nearly half of the vineyard has now been converted to it. Other trellis trials are also being evaluated including vertical shoot positioned, high single wire, Smart Dyson and ballerina.

## HENSCHKE VINEYARD FOCUS - Prue Henschke

### Soil Composition/Harvest/Clonal Program

The Mount Edelstone vineyard is underlain entirely by laminated siltstones of the Tapley Hill Formation. The soils on the vineyard slope are deep red silty/fine sandy loams, followed by a deep red-brown and yellow-brown mottled clay loam to clay. The soil layer goes to a significant depth before reaching the bedrock.

The pale mottled clay/clay loam layer indicates that a large degree of leaching and periodic waterlogging has occurred. Rocks beneath the red clay soils are schists of Cambrian age. These are metamorphosed mineral-rich sediments, originally deposited in a shallow sea, then deeply buried, and finally pushed back up to the surface where they weathered to produce a thick soil layer.

Originally the ground was cultivated for weed control. Nowadays the vineyard has a permanent sod culture of early-maturing perennial rye grass in the row. The vines are no longer dodged and a mulch of wheat straw is used under the vines to retain soil moisture, build up organic matter, and inhibit weed growth. Prediction of disease pressure through an integrated pest management program results in minimal chemical input in the vineyard.

The grapes are picked mid to late April at a sugar level of around 24°Brix. There is always a remarkable acid/pH balance from this vineyard. The anthocyanins in the berries are very high which indicates the superior quality of the Mount Edelstone shiraz.

Prue began a clonal selection program in 1986 to identify the best vines for propagation. With her assistant Uschi Linssen she tagged and mapped selected vines in the vineyard for viticultural features during the growing season using criteria such as even budburst, absence of the wood-rotting fungus *eutypa*, bunch numbers per shoot, the evenness of flowering and veraison, virus, and maturity and colour figures in the fruit. It was painstaking work, which also included a similar selection of the Hill of Grace vineyard.

Cuttings from the selected vines were planted in the nursery. The research work is ongoing and is a scientific program that will take up to 30 years to work through. Cuttings have been taken from the nursery vines, propagated, and planted as needed in the vineyard to replace old vines that have expired from dying arm, *Eutypa lata*.

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### PART III: EDEN VALLEY ESTATE VINEYARD

#### Vineyard Technical Information - EDEN VALLEY

- : Eden Valley wine region, on Cranes Range Road, 2 km west of Eden Valley, South Australia, high up in the Range east of the Barossa Valley.
- : Major: riesling, shiraz, semillon, cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay. Minor: sauvignon blanc, gewürztraminer, cabernet franc, merlot.
- : Planted in 1968.
- : 5 tonnes/hectare (2 tonnes/acre) varies across different varieties.
- : Sandy loam over gravel and bedrock, with patches of clay.
- : Ranges from Single Wire to Vertical Shoot positioned, High Single Wire, Scott Henry, and Minimal Pruned trial.
- : 2 m x 3.4 m
- : Under-vine mulching and permanent sward
- : Variation in site, variety and trellis gives us many combinations to enhance quality. Trials on canopy management and trellis style, old and new semillon clones and eutypa control.
- : 700 mm
- : 500 metres
- : 34° 38'
- : 139° 05'
- : North through west to south.
- : 32 hectares (80 acres)

**HISTORY:** Pioneer Charles Crane, after whom the village of Craneford is named, established the region in 1866, on a tributary at the source of the North Para River near Eden Valley. In 1877 George Crossman Thyer purchased a nearby property at the top of the range overlooking the valley, from a tract of land granted to George Fife Angas in 1856. This land was in the fertile area called Flaxmans Valley, named by German geologist Johann Menge in 1839. After Thyer's death it was transferred in 1912 to Joseph Hill Thyer, who pioneered the first vines on this property.

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## HENSCHKE VINEYARD FOCUS - Prue Henschke

Cyril Henschke purchased the property from his son Kenneth Crossman Thyer in 1966, and established a large planting of predominantly riesling and shiraz at a time when riesling was scarce and bonuses were being paid by the large wineries. Today the riesling is the source of the Julius Eden Valley Riesling, named in honour of great-uncle Julius Henschke, a highly acclaimed artist and sculptor, while the shiraz is used in the Keyneton Estate blend. This wine is named after the early English pioneer Joseph Keynes who settled at Keyneton in 1842 and after whom the village was named.

Other plantings subsequently took place. The cabernet sauvignon is the source of the Cyril Henschke, the wine made to honour the fourth generation of the Henschke family and one of Australia's outstanding winemakers and pioneers in the production of varietal table wines. In addition, it was Cyril who in 1958 created the wine that has so captured the heart of red wine drinkers around the world, the Hill of Grace. The semillon provides fruit for the Louis Eden Valley Semillon, named in tribute to vigneron Louis Henschke who tended the Hill of Grace vineyard for 40 years. The Cranes Chardonnay is named after Charles Crane and the Joseph Hill Gewürztraminer is named after Joseph Hill Thyer. Other minor varieties planted are sauvignon blanc, cabernet franc and merlot.

**LOCATION & VINEYARD MANAGEMENT:** The Henschke Eden Valley Estate vineyard is located in the cooler part of the Mount Lofty Ranges, in the Barossa Range just east of the Barossa Valley, at an altitude of 500 metres and a rainfall of 700 millimetres. The vines are planted on their own roots on a contour planting to conserve soil moisture and reduce erosion. They are effectively dry grown, although the soil moisture is monitored and in drier years drip irrigation is used to keep the vines physiologically active. Vines are planted on a spacing of 3.4 metres between rows and two metres between vines, and yield an average of five tonnes per hectare. There are a number of trellis types ranging from single wire to vertical shoot positioned to high single wire, Scott Henry and a trial of minimal pruned. There is ongoing research on canopy management and trellis style. A clonal research trial for semillon, including old and new clones, is being run and eutypa control trials on shiraz will help discover ways of improving the longevity of old vines.

**SOIL COMPOSITION:** The Eden Valley vineyard is on a range of well-drained duplex soils from sandy loam over gravel and bedrock with patches of clay to sandy loam over clay. Originally the ground was cultivated for weed control. Nowadays the vineyard has a permanent sod culture of early-maturing perennial rye and cocksfoot grasses in the row. The vines are no longer dodged and a wheat straw mulch is used under the vines to retain soil moisture, build up organic matter, and inhibit weed growth. Prediction of disease pressure through an integrated pest management program results in minimal chemical input in the vineyard.

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### PART IV: LENSWOOD VINEYARD

#### Vineyard Technical Information - LENSWOOD

: Lenswood - central Adelaide Hills. 25 km east of Adelaide. 50 km south west of Henschke Cellars at Keyneton. Situated at the top north end of the apple-growing valley, extending 1-2 km north and south from Lenswood.

: Chardonnay, riesling, pinot noir, merlot, cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc

: Between 1982 and 1987

: 5.8 tonnes/hectare (3.2 tonnes/acre)

: Well drained, sandy loam over medium clay interspersed with shale fragments overlying a shale bedrock

: Average rainfall, 1134 mm

: 544 metres

: 34° 54'

: 138° 50'

: 13 hectares (32 acres)

**THE APPEAL OF LENSWOOD:** In the days of vineyard expansion, during the late 1970s, the words on everybody's lips were 'Coonawarra cabernet'. Henschke was unique in having cabernet sauvignon planted at Eden Valley and winning wide acclaim for it, so the Coonawarra cabernet lure was not so enticing.

But there was another grape variety which was proving to be difficult, namely pinot noir, with chardonnay coming up behind. A really good pinot noir is a dream to drink, with rich wild berry flavours that fill out in the mouth with voluptuous silkiness. Nobody was really succeeding with this style and, although Australia has developed its own chardonnay style, the palate structure and length was also lacking in the chardonnays. From my studies at Geisenheim Wine Institute, Germany, palate-feel comes from the amount of 'Extrakt' or a measure of the soluble solids in a wine such as non-fermentable natural grape sugars, glycerols, phenolics and a whole range of other compounds. These two varieties obviously need the less stressed growing season as experienced in the best years in Europe.

Australia's hot dry summers which produce the big and equally voluptuous shiraz wines wasn't working for pinot noir. I was employed at Roseworthy Agricultural College as a technical assistant in viticulture at the same time that Dr Richard Smart and Peter Dry were summarising

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the viticultural climates in Australia, and the Adelaide Hills looked good. From my university days studying botany I knew that the Adelaide Hills was a unique, wetter, more humid, botanically rich climate which could not be found anywhere else in South Australia. Why go to Coonawarra when Lenswood could prove to be good vineyard country and was only three-quarters of an hour away?

**VINEYARD LOCATION:** Frost was a potential problem, hence we selected land with steeper slopes, covered in apple, cherry and pear trees. The future vineyard was positioned right at the top end of a long beautiful valley of apple orchards and natural forests at an altitude of 550 metres, an annual rainfall of 1134 millimetres and 15 kilometres north-east of Mount Lofty (700 metres). The area stays green until January and the humidity is greater than the lower-lying regions. We felt like invaders into this peaceful apple kingdom until the 1983 bushfires wiped out the whole orchard and made the changeover to vines easier.

**VARIETIES:** Now we have pinot noir, chardonnay, riesling, merlot and cabernet sauvignon planted over a 16-hectare property. Each of these varieties, apart from the cabernet sauvignon that struggles to get to 22°Brix every year, has achieved excellence because of the flavours and build-up of extract on the palate.

**The pinot noir** vines are still young but the wild berry fruit characters are evident on the voluptuous mouthfeel, and will become more intense with older, more settled vines. **The chardonnay** goes against the tide with its lighter, honeysuckle to gooseberry characters and great palate structure and length without the dominance of oak. **The merlot** has a rich fleshy structure with spicy berry characters - mulberries come to mind when tasting this wine. This is proving to be the flagship wine style for the Adelaide Hills vineyards. The cooler growing and ripening period of this region suits the variety and produces intense, spicy wines that go so well with lamb and game, especially hare and kangaroo.

**VINEYARD MANAGEMENT & CLONAL TRIALS:** The pursuance of quality has been achieved in such a short time, but there is always a cost. The different vineyard management that comes with high rainfall, steep slopes (30-40%), and upright curtain-foliage training has meant pioneering new techniques and different machinery. It is really frustrating at times when we know what needs to be done and no machinery is capable of doing the job. We adopt the 'minimum soil disturbance' attitude so vineyard preparation is a whole new ball game. We use pasture grasses as a green sward between the rows, which the Soil Conservation Board considers in a much better light than many other crops such as potatoes and brassicas. We still have a few things to rectify such as achieving a taller curtain of foliage and finding suitable acid soil tolerant-rootstocks to guard us against phylloxera.

We have several trials looking at different clones of pinot noir (we have nine, including the famous Bernard clones recently imported from the Burgundy area), chardonnay (five clones including two new Burgundian clones) and merlot (two). We also have different types of trellis to cope with high vigour in various spots in the vineyard. Running this vineyard cannot be done from a textbook - certainly not an American or an Australian one. It takes a lot of clever thinking and fine adjustment to make it work. It is always going to cost much more to produce grapes from steeper vineyards in wetter regions but at least we are not ruling ourselves out of making some of the best quality pinot noir, chardonnay, riesling and merlot in the country.