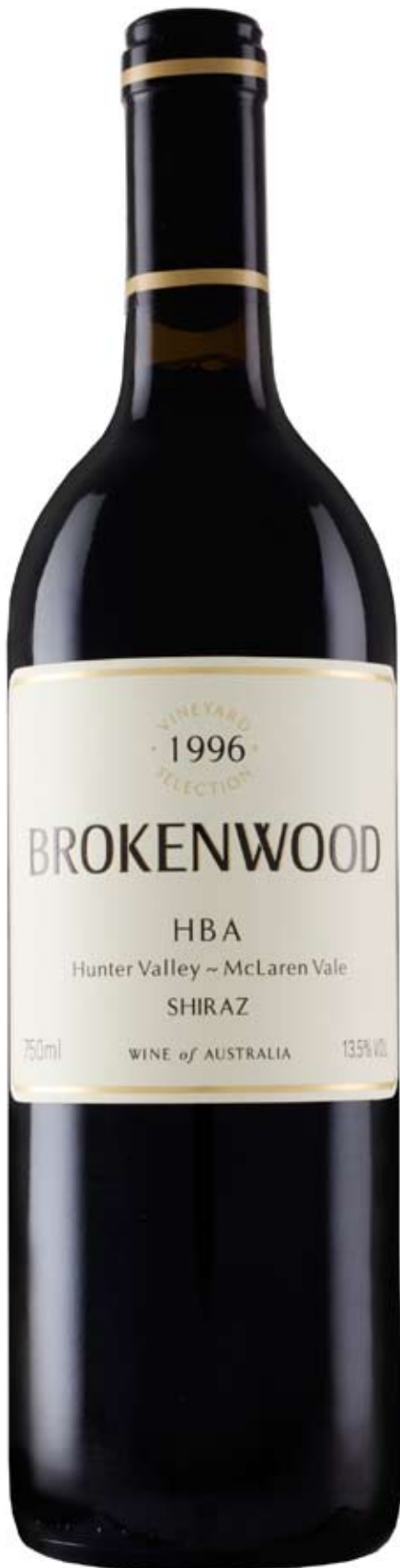


BROKENWOOD

AUSTRALIAN CRAFT AT ITS FINEST



1996 HBA

Variety: Shiraz
Region: Hunter Valley and McLaren Vale

Winemakers Comments:

For the Hunter Valley the cold and dry winter of 1995 was followed by very good spring rain. An excellent fruit set enabling a good yield. Some rain during the harvest meant that the cloud cover, combined with a reasonably large (for Brokenwood) crop, saw the sugars barely reached 13°Baume. Juice run off the norm to concentrate flavours.

McLaren Vale enjoyed a similar vintage although minus the rain. A more elegant Rayner was the result.

In subsequent vertical tastings of the Graveyard Shiraz the 1996 is a standout with soft, earthy leather flavours and medium body. For the HBA blend the Rayner Shiraz adds a layer of richness.

The genesis for the blend lies with all the great regional blends made in Australia in the 40s, 50s and 60s. Master winemakers like O'Shea, Preece and Haselgrove knew that different regions offered different characters. Many have been fortunate enough 40 or 50 years later to taste these blends and are staggered by their sublime character.

The Hardy's Private Bin Burgundy was the best vat of the St Thomas Burgundy range, aged and then released later. This was a blend and usually just Hunter Shiraz and McLaren Vale Shiraz. The 1958 Bin C184 opened recently was superb.

These wines provided the inspiration for the HBA.

Vinification:

The Graveyard Shiraz was fermented in 2 tonne open fermenters and the year provided a perfect opportunity for Caroline Dunn to complete her 4th year Oenology project on juice run-off trials. This proved very useful for the vintage. Maturation in predominantly French oak.

The Rayner grapes were crushed in McLaren Vale, trucked chilled (good cold soaking time) to the Hunter. Fermentation in vinimatics and open tanks with oak being predominantly American with some being hogsheads.

Bottled in August 1997.

Tasting Notes:

Now at 11 years of age (being a 2007 release) with 10 years bottle maturation, this wine is drinking at its peak. This is not say that it is not worth further bottle aging as it will (cork surviving).

The colour has developed to a tawny red but still has vibrancy to the red hues. Great complexity on the nose. Aged aromas of leather, earth and red spices. No one character dominates – background vanillin from the oak and briar Hunter Valley notes.

The palate is where the interest lies for this wine in trying to recreate this style. Many Australia reds of 40–50 years ago were called 'Burgundy'. True Burgundy is of course Pinot Noir, but the soft earthy characters were thought to be reminiscent of Burgundy.

The 1996 HBA has the almost ethereal flavours so desired. Tasting the 1996 along side an old Reserve Bin Burgundy the briar savoury nature of Hunter shiraz and the earthy 'fruitier' McLaren Vale are similar. The difference is the higher level of oak in the modern version. Len Evans who had an input in getting the Brokenwood version off the ground was adamant that oak could and should play a part.

Very good weight with medium alcohol (13.4%). These are not blockbuster wines and it isn't needed to get a wine to age. Balance of flavours is. Ripe tannins, good acid backbone and now, tannins from maturation round out the excellent palate.

Best with lamb or lighter meat dishes.