

Terre à Terre Wrattobully Red 2016

December 2018

Terre à Terre is proud to present its third release of red blend (previously labelled as Rouge) coming mostly from its very unique close-spaced vineyard in Wrattobully, South Australia. This vineyard has been baptised the Crayères Vineyard, after the chalk cellars that are found throughout Xavier's region of birth in Champagne, France. Similar natural structures are found underneath this very special vineyard, and they are now the subject of a research project led by a team from the University of Adelaide as they are full of undisturbed ancient fossilised remains.

The Crayères vineyard is located next to Tapanappa's Whalebone Vineyard, at the top of a north-south limestone ridge in Wrattobully, one of Australia's most exciting regions. The Terra Rossa top-soil is characteristic of the area. The Cabernet Sauvignon and the Shiraz blocks were planted on rootstocks in 2008 using cuttings from the neighbouring Whalebone Vineyard and French clones and at a relatively high density for the area (4,444 vines per hectare, similar to the density of vineyards in Saint Emilion). The fruiting wire is only 50cm above ground, which is why the local vigneron call the vines the "low vines".

The 2016 growing season was the warmest and driest on record – from the start until the end. Ideal flowering conditions led to early fruit set. Dry soils created the perfect conditions for the establishment of a very balanced and open canopy, with no need for trimming after very efficient manual shoot thinning in early December. Véraison occurred even earlier than 2015 and finished quickly for all varieties. Because of the perfect fruit set, and high potential yields, all red varieties were bunch thinned at véraison to make sure the yields were kept to 6 tonnes per hectare. The Crayères vineyard did not experience any severe heatwaves in 2015/16, apart from one day reaching 40 degrees in December. However, we believe the drought slowed down the ripening process after véraison and the fruit was picked at the same time as 2015 for all varieties. For the first time we collected data from the weather station in the Crayères vineyard. It shows 1,791 degree days from October 2015 to April 2016, which is significantly higher than average. It was a difficult growing season, the vines struggled at the end of ripening to get through the drought and some vines had to be left out at picking. However, the fruit that was picked was superb for all varieties.

The fruit (46% Cabernet Franc and 42% Shiraz) was all handpicked mid-late March 2016 and was of stunning quality. The fruit was transported back to the Tiers winery in the Piccadilly Valley (Adelaide Hills) before it was crushed and destemmed. The must was fermented in open top fermenters. After fermentation and maceration, the must was pressed off skins and racked to 225L French oak *barrisques* (40% new) where it aged for 10 months. An additional 12% Merlot from the Summertown Vineyard in Piccadilly Valley was then added while racking off lees to a three-year old 4,300L *foudre* where the final blend aged for a further 18 months. The wine was egg-white fined before being bottled without filtration early December 2018.

This **Experimental Assemblage** for Terre à Terre is probably the best value wine available in the country, 40% new oak and 28 months in oak. It demonstrates how well Shiraz and Cabernet Franc work together in a blend. The aromas are different to the 2014 and 2015 with more ripe fruit and aromatic spice. The palate is seriously structured and lengthy, a truly great Australian blend and at this price it will not last. Only 630 dozen were produced. **RRP: \$32, Alc.: 13.8%v/v**