

THE PLAYGROUND



2011 'SIX MILLION DOLLAR' SHIRAZ

EACH VINTAGE, WE MONKEYS AT TEUSNER CAN'T RESIST THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY AROUND WITH SMALL PARCELS OF INTERESTING STUFF. MOSTLY SMALL BATCH MAKES, AND MORE OFTEN THAN NOT ONE OFFS. THE 'PLAYGROUND' SERIES LETS US SHOW OFF WHAT COMES FROM MUCKING AROUND.

Eden Valley...high altitude...2011, a cooler, wetter year than ever known... 'Spog' Forrest's Shiraz...late March...fruit at 10 baumé and losing the battle with mould...a vineyard barely alive. Enter Kym Teusner..."Gentlemen. We can rebuild this Shiraz. We have the technology. We have the fruit and the capability to make a Shiraz that will have those cool climate loving, skinny jean wearing, beard growing hipsters doing donuts on their Vespas. Spog's Shiraz will be that wine. Different to what it was last year....spicier...more north Rhone....less south Rhone."

"When things are going as pear shaped as they were in the Eden Valley late in the 2011 vintage, it's usually hasta la vista baby, the fruit stays on the vine and we move on. But walking through tasting this crop, it looked strangely spectacular, very reminiscent of the northern Rhone Shiraz...loads of dark pepper, spice and olives. So then and there the decision was made to have a crack at the Barossa's first 10° baumé Shiraz! In went the harvesters to pick the fruit... also venturing into a patch of Viognier reckoning the extra richness and aroma from a splash could be handy. The fruit was crushed straight to the press and straight away half the juice was run off, increasing the skin to juice ratio to concentrate flavour and intensify color. The separated juice was shipped off to a mates place to be subjected it to all sorts of stuff to remove as much liquid as possible...and we got it back to the winery at a whopping 960gms per liter of residual sugar...pretty much sugar syrup which when added back to the ferment increased the baumé to around 14°. By the time we pressed the ferment, we were left with about half the wine volume we'd normally expect. 18 months sitting around in some nice shiny new Radoux oak and hey presto, we have a beautifully balanced cool climate styled Barossa Shiraz. Maybe we should have entered it in the Jimmy...?"

KYM TEUSNER, BIGGEST KID IN THE PLAYGROUND