

PENLEY ESTATE

1995 PHOENIX CABERNET SAUVIGNON PENLEY COONAWARRA VINEYARD TASTING NOTES

Release: February 1997
Area: Coonawarra
Country: Australia
Objective: To create a clearly approachable and drinkable young red wine showing the unique characteristics that can be recognised as that of Australia's Coonawarra district found in the heart of the Limestone Coast.

Variety: Cabernet Sauvignon
Analysis: 12.5% Alcohol, 6.8g/l total acid, 3.43ph

Penley's flagship Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon has successfully positioned Penley in the ranks of quality wine producers in Australia. However it is a wine which is the "best of the best", choices are made in the vineyard then individual ferments and finally barrel by barrel choice. Penley's vineyard does give potential to increase volume but it is finite and will depend on the season. However, the price point makes the flagship wine out of reach for many. There is an increased recognition of Coonawarra Cabernet as representing both uniqueness and quality. Penley has recognised this uniqueness by planting significant hectares of Cabernet Sauvignon to have an ability to produce a mix of Cabernet products.

Phoenix History: The primary influence is Penley's philosophy to try and produce the best quality Australian wine possible, utilising both viticultural region, expertise and tradition. Phoenix recognises the first winemaking company that Penley's Chief Executive/Winemaker's, great grandfather (Douglas Austral Tolley), purchased in 1888. This company had its roots in 1858, was called the "The Phoenix Winemaking and Distilling Company", in Stepney Adelaide, South Australia. On purchase by DAT. in 1890 this was changed to "Tolley Scott Tolley" (T.S.T.) and remained with the family till 1960. DAT's other wine company (D.A. Tolley Pty Ltd Pedare Wines) continued under family ownership until 1996.

Coonawarra Connection: The value and quality of Coonawarra was recognised by Douglas Austral Tolley as early as 1908. DAT. supplied oak barrels and equipment to a winemaker in the district, so gaining access to the wines of Coonawarra. This wine was to form a major part of blended wine to be exported to the United Kingdom during these times. From 1913 to 1925 more purchases were made from the Richardson family. The Richardson vineyard property from which this early wine originated now forms part of Penley Estate, Coonawarra. To quote from early Tolley records the following was stated: "The Coonawarra wines were distinctly different from Hope Valley (Tolley home vineyard site near Adelaide). They were dark purple in colour and they had characteristic aroma whilst fermenting." Nothing has changed!

The Wine: The colour is bright crimson with hints of amber due to its oak maturation and specific handling techniques. The aroma is fresh and lively with fruit dominate. Distinct blackberry/blackcurrant (Cassis) with hints of mint, all characteristic of good Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon. The flavour is young, fruity but with a hint of soft grape and oak tannin, so typical of the Penley Style. 1995 is an elegant style with medium weight. A wine which is soft, balanced, approachable with distinct regional characteristics.

Maturation: The oak is minimal but discernible so the small amount of wood tannin and fruit flavours will aid maturation if required. Best enjoyed for next 1 to 5 years. Premium wine must have the ability for some bottle age, since there is sometimes 1 to 2 years between bottled and actual drinking.

Vintage Comment: A very dry winter affecting fruit set and so small yielding year. Warm and dry summer with hot January and February, but leading to cool, late season. Slow ripening with late April/May rains. maturation levels on all varieties (except Shiraz) were average.

Penley Style: The balance is a key feature in all Penley wines. This will ensure the wines will mature successfully in the bottle. This wine shows dominance of spicy cabernet fruit with hints of smoky oak and grape tannin. A wine made to enjoy while the young distinct but elegant Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon characters are evident. 80% French Tronais oak, 20% American. 20% of this oak is 1995, 80% is secondhand, with barrel fermented to provide the right amount of integration of oak and fruit. Each year the amount of time in oak will depend on season.

Awards: 90/100 Points Wine Spectator Outstanding, a wine of superior character and style (August 1997)
90/100 Points Wine Spectator Outstanding (June 1998)
Silver Medal Wine Magazine International Wine Challenge 1997
Silver Medal Asia Pacific Wine Challenge 1997
Bronze Medal Class 27 1997 Canberra Show
Bronze Medal Class 33 1997 Hobart Show
Bronze Medal Class 16 1997 Adelaide Show
Bronze Medal Boutique Wines of Australia 1997
Bronze Medal Class 41 1997 Melbourne Show
3 Star Winestate Magazine (Limestone Coast Tasting September/October Issue 1997)