

# PENLEY ESTATE

## 1998 PHOENIX CABERNET SAUVIGNON TASTING NOTES

**Release:** February 2000  
**Area:** Coonawarra  
**Country:** Australia

**Variety:** Cabernet Sauvignon  
**Analysis:** 14% Alcohol, 6.9% g/l total acid, 3.36 pH

**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. Penley's (flagship) Reserve 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 Phoenix Winemaking and Distilling Company", in Stepney Adelaide, South Australia. On purchase by DAT. In 1888 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 dominant but quite intense due to the 1998 vintage conditions. Distinct blackberry/ blackcurrant (Cassis) with hints of mint, all characteristics of a 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 though reflecting intensity that is 1998. 1998 is a rich style with full weight. A wine which is full bodied but soft and 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:** Above average yields but wines well structured and deeply coloured and flavoured. Classic, rich, ripe and intense. Late winter, early spring rain ensured plenty of important moisture for the growing season. Budburst, flowering and fruit set was even amid calm and mild weather. Summer continued with ideal warmth and little rain. No extremes ensured long, even and slow fruit maturation. Harvest earlier than 1996 and 1997 vintages with warm days and cool nights. Some late rain in April, though significant, it fell rapidly followed by sunny and drying conditions.

**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, a dense ripeness with hints of smoky oak and grape tannin. A wine made to enjoy while the young distinct, strong but elegant Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon characters are evident 50% French Tronçais Oak, 50% American. 55% of this oak is 1998, 45% is second hand, 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.

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**Awards:** Awards are now generally given to wines already bottled and labelled. Hence any awards are more likely in the year of sale.

📖 95 Points	Wine Magazine – August 2001
📖 90 Points	Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, June 2001, “an <u>excellent buy</u> ”.
📖 89 Points	Wine Spectator July 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2001 (New Releases)
🏆 Trophy	2000 Australian Small Winemakers Show – Champion Red Wine
🏆 Trophy	2000 Australian Small Winemakers Show – Best Dry Red
🏆 Gold	Class 26 20000 Australian Small Winemakers Show
🏆 Gold	2000 InterVin International
🏆 Silver	The Dallas Morning News 2001 Wine Competition
🏆 Silver	Class27 2000 National Wine Show of Australia
🏆 Silver	Class 4010 2000 Royal Bathurst Cool Climate Wine Show (Trophy – Most Successful Exhibitor)
🏆 Silver	Class 33 2000 Perth Wine Show
🏆 Silver	Class 48 2000 Queensland Wine Show
🏆 Silver	Japan International Wine Challenge 2000
🏆 Silver	International Wine Challenge 2000
🏆 Bronze	Class 35 2001 Sydney Royal Wine Show
🏆 Bronze	Singapore International Wine Challenge 2000
🏆 Bronze	Class 41 2000 Royal Melbourne Wine Show
92/100	Wine & Spirits Annual Buying Guide (Special Issue Winter 2001)
🏆 Commended	2000 International Wine & Spirit Competition
*****	The Age/Sydney Morning Herald “Uncorked”, Winter 2001