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# Elderton BUZZ

## 25 Vintages of Command

IN FEBRUARY 1984, NEIL AND LORRAINE ASHMEAD MADE THE MOMENTOUS DECISION TO PRODUCE AN ELITE, DRY RED TABLE WINE IN AN AUSTRALIAN MARKETPLACE THAT DID NOT HAVE TOO MANY OF WHICH TO SPEAK.

Over the previous few years Neil and Lorraine had admired the old Shiraz vines on the property (planted in 1894) and remarked on the intensity and colour that the small bunches of fruit had shown. They also loved the wine that was made from

those bunches. Neil and Lorraine wanted to make a wine that would transcend time and fashion; a wine of place; and something that showed the hallmarks of being great on an historic Australian scale.

They were seemingly unfazed that many around them were pulling their old Shiraz vines out at the time, and instead pressed ahead with what would be the Ashmead family flagship.

After many a family meeting, the decision was made to call this wine Command: signifying power, richness and intensity, as well as being a word that simply demanded

respect.

Thirty years later, 1 March 2014 signalled the release of the 25th Command Shiraz since the 1984 vision. We at Elderton could not be prouder with what this wine has achieved and, more importantly, how many great times this wine has provided.

Over the past 30 years we have been through floods and droughts, warm and cool vintages, booms and recessions, fads and trends, but we feel Command transcends all of these hurdles.

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## 25 Vintages of Command

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Most things in this world have changed in the past three decades, however the values that drove Neil and Lorraine still drive their sons Allister and Cameron. The 1894 Command block will always be the fruit source for this single vineyard wine, and the Ashmeads will continue to make the wine in a manner that respects its origins and history.

Today, the grapes are handpicked on three to four occasions to ensure optimal ripeness, then put through open topped concrete fermenters and after a week or so are pressed and put into 100 per cent new oak barrels (2/3 American puncheons,

1/3 French puncheons). Amazingly, the Command Shiraz spends up to three years in these barrels before bottling.

To date there have been two vintages that were never released: 1989 for fruit quality reasons; and 1991 for financial reasons (due to the recession 'we had to have', and Neil and Lorraine's desire to invest in their children's education, there were scarce resources to produce the outstanding vintage). Sadly, due to incessant rain, the 2011 will not be released next year, as the Ashmead family will never compromise on quality.

Looking back on 25 vintages, the

Command has an enviable list of accolades and supporters. It is now enjoyed at great restaurants in over 30 countries across the world and is constantly held up as not only one of the great wines of Australia, but one of the great wines of the world.

It is truly hard to pick favourites, as each vintage showcases the best attributes that the season gave. Different people look for different things, but the Ashmeads are particularly proud of the 1986, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2010 vintages.

We look forward to seeing what the next 25 vintages bring. Viva Command!



## 2010 Command Shiraz - A Classic

The 2010 Command Shiraz, released on 1 March, is the 25th release of this wine from Elderton and is a very exciting prospect. Very exciting indeed!

This wine is destined to go down as an Australian classic and one of the greatest vintages of Command to date. The Ashmead family believes the 2010 Command is up there with the pinnacle vintages of 1992, 1996 and 2002 and will have the ability to drink young or be cellared into the long term (20 years +).

Produced from a single block on the property, which is also celebrating its 120th birthday in 2014, this is an example of single vineyard winemaking at its finest.

2010 was a marquee vintage, with everything going to plan. Winter rains were followed by a wonderful spring and a long moderate summer, allowing the fruits physiological ripeness to be at its absolute prime.

The wine itself is a powerhouse, yet in the words of James Halliday is still '...a very elegant and refined shiraz that fully lives up to its reputation.' The wine received the outstanding 95 point rating from Halliday, and we believe the accolades will continue to roll in as the wine hits the tables of wine scribes, restaurateurs and general drinkers in the coming months.

We definitely recommend tucking away some of the 2010 Command in your personal cellar, not only because of the wine's quality, but also it will be a two year wait until the release of the next Command (the 2011 vintage will not be released due to the massive amounts of rain that we received that harvest).



## Milestones for Elderton and friends!

It seems only fair that on the Command vineyard's 120th birthday we should share the anniversary with other major milestones.

We are proud to continue as the Official Wine Partner of the Carlton Football Club, who are celebrating 150 years in 2014.

We are also heralding another new relationship with news hot off the press that we are the Exclusive Wine Partner of Waratahs Rugby, and 2014 is their 140th year!





## New vintage tributes



With much excitement, we are happy to announce the release of the 2010 Ode to Lorraine alongside the 2012 Neil Ashmead Grand Tourer Shiraz. Both of these wines are from phenomenal vintages and sit firmly among the best that Elderton make. Dedicated to each of the founders of Elderton, we think these are wines to make our parents proud!

The 2010 Ode to Lorraine is again a blend of some of the best parcels of Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Merlot from the Elderton Estate vineyard. It is the Ashmeads' belief that this wine is the hidden gem of the entire Elderton range. Aged predominantly in French oak, the wine is luscious with wonderful structure and will cellar well. The 2010 is simply a cracker.

The 2012 Neil Ashmead Grand Tourer is such a delicious wine made from a single parcel of Shiraz vines that are about 75 years old. This wine is very small batch and made for instant gratification. We actually find this too delicious to cellar, but know that it will look even better in 5 – 10 years.



Neil and Lorraine with the Jimmy Watson

## Upcoming events

**Fringe @ Elderton, Sunday 9 March 2014, 12pm - 4pm**

@ Cellar Door Elderton hosts it's first event as part of 'Barossa Fringe' during the Adelaide Fringe Festival! Listen to *Blueprint* whilst relaxing on the Cellar Door lawn with friends and family.



**Major City Command Masterclasses - TBA**

We are considering organising some Command Masterclasses in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane later in the year. Please send your expressions of interest in attending such an event to [jess@eldertonwines.com.au](mailto:jess@eldertonwines.com.au)

**Ribs Barossa Style, Friday 6 June @ Cellar Door**

Skive off work early for a long weekend 'long lunch' with the Ashmeads.

**Shiraz & Pies, Sunday 13 July @ Cellar Door, 12pm - 4pm**

Warm up by the braziers with live music, Command Shiraz & beef pies.

**Barossa Gourmet Weekend, 15 - 17 August**

Be consumed by Barossa hospitality with a weekend of wine, music and delicious food.

**Masters & Commanders weekend, 6 and 7 December 2014**

The fourth annual Masters & Commanders weekend begins with a Masterclass on Saturday afternoon. The Masters & Commanders Cup will take place on Sunday 7 December at Tanunda Pines Golf Club. Full details will be released later in the year.

For further details or to book your spot at any of these events contact Cellar Door via [elderton@eldertonwines.com.au](mailto:elderton@eldertonwines.com.au) or 08 8568 7878. See you there!

## To decant or not to decant...

... this is a question we often receive at Elderton regarding our red wines.

The easy answer to this question is that there is no easy answer! However, here are a few pointers from *Decanter Magazine* that will hopefully get you going in the right direction:

- Generally speaking some aeration is better than none, although we do understand that you may be desperate for a drink!
- Simply opening a wine and leaving it in the bottle for a few hours will have little effect on the flavour of the wine.
- Younger wines should be decanted for a longer period (1 - 2 hours), and the process of decanting can be a touch rougher (you want the wine to receive oxygen to open it up).
- Older wines need to be decanted gently (to remove any potential sediment),

and for a short amount of time < 1 hour only. Too much time and the wine may fall apart.

- Very rich wines can shed some of their puppy fat from longer decanting, but will also lose some of their freshness.
- You cannot resuscitate a wine that is already past it through decanting.

For best drinking pleasure also, we recommend serving the wines at the correct drinking temperatures (something we often don't do well in this country). When we say cellar temperature we would ideally like our red wines served around 18 degrees Celsius.

As always though, it is each to their own. Don't let this article put you off if you are happy drinking wines in a different manner. Wine is an individual thing, and nothing upsets us more than wine snobbery. Basically, do what makes you happy – especially if it is drinking Elderton!





## Gallery

COMMAND  
SINGLE VINEYARD



Above: Our 60 year old fermenters receiving some TLC before the upcoming vintage. Below: Vintage 2014 begins! The first load of grapes in to the winery is Chardonnay from our Greenock vineyard on 6 Feb.



If you are on our mailing list, but do not currently receive our email updates and occasional special offers, we would love to hear from you. Contact Cellar Door via 08 8568 7878 or email [elderton@eldertonwines.com.au](mailto:elderton@eldertonwines.com.au)

Above left: The appropriately named 'Buzz', new pup of Cam and family. Below left: The peloton racing past our Cellar Door on the second lap of the first stage of the 2014 Santos Tour Down Under, 21 January 2014. We hosted visitors in our 'Le Cycling Cafe'. Below right: Team Tinkoff Saxo enjoying the centipede bike at Cellar Door during a break from their training ride prior to the Tour Down Under.



Above top: Our best dressed visitors for the Greenock Masterclass, held on Masters & Commanders weekend late 2013. The Queensland lads got into the spirit in their French Commander costumes. Above: Winners at the 2013 Masters & Commanders Cup at Tanunda Pines Golf Club. Below: First stop on the Greenock Masterclass, Grenache tasting.



Above left: Cameron with his new bestie Bernard Fanning, backstage at Day on the Green at Peter Lehmann Wines in November 2013. Above right: Allister and Cameron celebrating Australia's win at the Adelaide Oval Ashes game in December 2013. Below left: Elderton's Christmas celebration at the Homestead - a long table Chinese banquet by Barossa super-chef Peter Clarke of Vintners. Below right: Peter Wild (Vineyard Manager) and Cameron enjoying some Champagne at the Christmas celebration.



To share photos of you and your friends enjoying Elderton,  
email [jess@eldertonwines.com.au](mailto:jess@eldertonwines.com.au)