

LA LÍNEA

Adelaide Hills Tempranillo



Tempranillo is Spain's great red grape. Grown all across the country in diverse climates, and made in many styles, it is the Spanish equivalent of Australia's Shiraz. Famous UK wine writer Jancis Robinson describes it as "... capable of making deep coloured, long-lasting wines that are not... notably high in alcohol", with characters including "strawberries... spice, leather and tobacco leaves...". We could not have said it better!

But it's still early days for Tempranillo in Australia. While the list of companies making the variety is growing rapidly, most have only been at it for a year or two. That's not true of La Linea, as winemaker Peter Leske's experience goes back to 2001, when he made probably the first Tempranillo in the Adelaide Hills, at Nepenthe. His experience is complemented by the extensive knowledge of David LeMire MW, who knows Spanish wines better than just about anyone in Australia.

This is the third La Linea dry red Tempranillo. It is subtly different to its two predecessors, as it is a blend of the two La Linea vineyard sources. In 2007 the fruit was sourced from the Amadio Kersbrook vineyard in the northern Adelaide Hills. The significant mid-vintage heat-wave of 2008 meant that we changed sources, and in that year used the Llangibby block at Echunga (which is cooler and more vigorous) for both our rosé and dry red—albeit picked on two separate occasions. In 2009 the best wine was a blend of the two, and so it is approximately 60% the richer, more tannic and savoury wine from the warmer Kersbrook block, with a smaller but no less important contribution from the fragrant, finer, Llangibby fruit.

Each was harvested and vinified separately; both in small open fermenters with hand plunging, followed by maturation in our favourite 'pleasantly aged' 3 and 4 year-old French oak barrels. Both batches underwent natural malolactic fermentation in barrel; the Llangibby seemed to need more air and so was racked and returned to barrel, while the Kersbrook wine slept quietly on lees for the entire time. Reflecting the fact that is (deliberately!) not a super-rich, concentrated oaky monster, we opted to rack, blend and bottle just before Christmas 2009, making the oak maturation time just over 8 months.

We aim for a varietal wine of moderate body, but with the savoury tannin structure for which 'Temp' is renowned. Again, we see aromas of red berries (cherries, raspberries and mulberries), and dried herbs—plus a note of tobacco leaf this year! It is of medium weight, without evident alcohol, and a core of tannin which provides the gentle astringency and ensures length of flavour. No oak influence to speak of; but it's there as a hint of chestnut, and the time in barrel has of course contributed to the evolution of those tannins prior to bottling. (The French have a lovely word for this phase and phenomenon: *élevage*, or 'raising'; they use the same word in the context of parenthood...).

We hope that you appreciate our new family member.

2009 La Linea Tempranillo

- **Recommended retail:** **\$28.00**
- **Wine details:** **13.5% v/v; RS 1.5 g/L; pH 3.67; TA 5.8 g/L**

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