



Winemaker Profile

PAUL CARPENTER, Winemaker

April 2010

At Wirra Wirra it's all about the wine and that's why we attract some of the country's best winemakers to the Wirra Wirra tribe, with Paul Carpenter no exception. A talented winemaker, Carpenter has recently wandered back through the Woodhenge fence and we couldn't be happier to have one of our favourite sons return to the fold. Working alongside senior winemaker Paul Smith the duo are set to make their mark on the highly regarded Wirra Wirra wine range.

A true local, Paul grew up in Wirra Wirra country on his parent's cut flower farm at Willunga in the McLaren Vale region where a love of the outdoors was instilled from a young age. Tertiary education saw him attain a Bachelor degree in Applied Science at Roseworthy Agricultural College north of Adelaide which was then put to use at the university where he worked on various research projects primarily focussed on cereal research. During this period Carpenter had his first taste vintage, getting his hands dirty at Geoff Merrill in 1995.

After spending two years working at the university, the lure of wine was too strong to resist and Carpenter again returned to Geoff Merrill for the 1997 vintage. It was following this vintage that he first made his way within the Woodhenge fence, joining the Wirra Wirra tribe to work in the cellar where he would remain until the 2000 vintage. During this period "Carpsy", as he had become know, took up a vintage opportunity in 1998 at Chateau de Bluizard in Beaujolais, where he gained valuable experience in old world winemaking.

Continuing his education with a Graduate Diploma in Oenology at the University of Adelaide, Carpenter then headed to North America where he joined Oregon winery Archery Summit for their 2001 vintage crafting pinot noir and chardonnay for the highly regarded house.

Carpenter finished the year by heading back to Wirra Wirra in December where he took on the role of assistant winemaker working with then senior winemaker Samantha Connew and where he remained with the tribe until 2004 when he moved down the road to Hardy's Tintara winery to become their red winemaker.

Promoted to senior winemaker a year later, Carpenter saw great success during his five years with Tintara winning two Max Schubert trophies for Best Red Wine at the Royal Adelaide Wine Show in 2007 and 2008, Best Wine of Show at the Royal Adelaide Show in 2007 and Best Wine of Show at the National Wine Show in Canberra in 2008.

Most recently, Carpenter has had the honour of being crowned the 2009/10 McLaren Vale Bushing King (honouring the winemaker of the Best Wine of Show) and being named a finalist for *Winestate* magazine's Winemaker of the Year for 2009.

A self-confessed Grenache fan, when Carpsy isn't busy making some of our favourite Wirra Wirra drops, he's most likely at his McLaren Vale home spending time with wife Martine and their three children Lily, Samuel and Emma while enjoying a Rhone Valley wine from southern France and thinking of new varietals for the Wirra Wirra range.

"The obvious love of wine, the focus on viticulture and the culture of the Wirra Wirra tribe is why I couldn't resist coming back. Working with Smithy, Andrew Kay and the team here at Wirra Wirra while continuing the fine winemaking tradition at as well as having a few laughs on the way is what makes this so much fun. At Wirra Wirra, it's the winemaking that always comes first."