



## 2006 ALBERT BAROSSA VALLEY SHIRAZ

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"When I look back over the last 20 vintages I've been getting my hands dirty making wine in various capacities in the Barossa, there are a few vintages that put a smile on my face...and 2006 is definitely one of them. The third of three great vintages in a row starting with the brilliant 2004, and each quality rivals to the best I've seen since, perhaps with the exceptional 2012 being a standout amongst the very best of them.

The 2006 Albert was blended from fruit grown in the 70 year old Riebke "Schrapel Block" at Ebenezer, which is the dominant partner in the blend at 75%, complemented by 25% from a 90 year old vineyard at Gomersal. The dry grown vines share a common ground, planted in light sandy soils over fractious red clays which provide a valuable source of moisture that has been fundamental to the longevity of both vineyards. Despite what they share in common in the dirt that is their home, the wines produced are quite contrasting. The Riebke block shows plenty of distinctive vibrant aromas of mint and eucalypt, but without the depth and richness of fruit weight typically associated with Barossa Valley Shiraz. In contrast, the block at Gomersal shows little in the way of aroma...but what it lacks in aroma it makes up for with depth and weight of fruit flavour. They're contrasting characters, but wonderfully compatible in the final blend. In the winery, the fruit was destemmed and fermented in open fermenters for five days. Every 12 hours, we drained the juice into new French oak hogsheads which assisted with seasoning the new oak and integrating the oak tannins at an earlier stage in the winemaking process, before returning the juice to the skins for another 12 hours. Once dry, the wine was pressed to barrel and matured in blend of 30% new French oak and 70% seasoned oak for 18 months before bottling.

Tasting this wine 10 years down the track, I'm fairly impressed. Teusner Wines had only come to life 5 years earlier, and this was only the 3<sup>rd</sup> vintage of Albert we made....so we were probably still finding our way in some respects. (And this one was sealed by cork...a mistake I no longer make!) The calling card of the Riebke vineyard, that distinctive mint/ eucalypt character is still very much evident on the nose, and whilst there's still a decent lick of rich dark fruit at the core, secondary characters of cedar and leather are beginning to creep to the fore as the wine ages. It's still a tasty drop and a great expression of a 10 year old Barossa Valley Shiraz, but I reckon (at least from my perspective) that I'd be wanting to drink through what I've got left in the cellar over the next few years.

KYM TEUSNER, WINEMAKER



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