

2011 Cane Cut Marsanne

Tahbilk, Victoria, Australia

Product details

Vintage:	2011	Drinking:	Now 2024
Producer:	Tahbilk	Alcohol:	
Region:	Victoria	Variety:	Marsanne
Country:	Australia		

Tasting notes

92 Points.

About the producer

With its moderate climate, long river and row upon row of Marsanne, Viognier and Syrah vines, Tahbilk is a lovely piece of the Northern Côtes du Rhône. Except that the Tahbilk winery is in the heart of Victoria, Australia - the eucalyptus, acacia and gumtrees around the winery make that very clear, if the 22-hour flight to Melbourne didn't.

The Tahbilk winery's name comes from the Aboriginal phrase tabilk tabilk, meaning "place of many watering holes" and it is the Nagambie Lakes and surrounding wetlands, linked by the Goulburn River, which make this one of the few places in the world outside the Rhône with the right climate for some of these grapes - in particular Marsanne. In fact, Tahbilk has the largest single acreage of this sensitive grape found anywhere in the world. These bodies of water contribute to cooler temperatures which allow a long hang time, during which complex aromatics can develop. The red, sandy loam - unusual for Victoria - has high levels of ferrous oxide which impart a unique minerality to the wines.

Tahbilk was first established in 1860 amid the sort of wheeling, dealing and apocryphal tales as you might expect from frontier times in the wake of a local gold rush. By the end of the century, however, the estate was producing award-winning wines, under the guidance of vigneron François Coueslant. In 1900, phylloxera was found on vines at Tahbilk and over 100 acres of vines were lost. However, 200 acres survived, including a small parcel of 1860-planted Shiraz - today, they are some of the oldest non-grafted pre-phylloxeran Shiraz/Shiraz vines in the world.

It was the Purbrick family who brought Tahbilk into the 20th century - and continued to renew it so it was ready for the 21st. In 1925, 75 years after the gold rush, Reginald Purbrick saw riches in the alluvial soil here - but not precious metals, nutrients for crops. He had a background in the dairy business, so grass was the crop he envisaged in place of vines. However, his son Eric persuaded him to revitalise the existing Tahbilk winery and became the family's first winemaker.

Eric's son John, now in his late 80s, became the guiding chairman, but it is his grandson Alister who is the family's first fully qualified winemaker. He has refined the styles Tahbilk wines have become known for - whites with vitality and fruit-led multi-layered reds. In the fifth generation, John's daughter Hayley has taken over much of the management, and Armit Wines has been working with her and daughter team since 2013 to bring these wonderful wines to the UK. Hayley Purbrick has introduced the carbon-neutral strategy which informs the winery's operations. In addition to tree planting and organic waste treatment programmes, the winery has reduced its emissions and offsets the rest.



Tahbilk Marsannes explore the possibilities of this grape in different directions. The regular release is fragrant and fresh, with citrus and tropical flowers. The bottle-aged Museum Release starts to develop rich depth with marmalade on buttered toast, or baked lemon meringue pie. And the 1927 Vines, exclusively from old growth, expresses the terroir's crunchy minerality along with crisp citrus and lively ginger character.

The sparkling wine Coueslant (after the 19th century winemaker) is a fresh take on the citrus and honeysuckle nose, and pear and nut tart palate of Tahbilk Marsanne, while Cane Cut Marsanne is a luscious dessert wine produced when canes of selected Marsanne vines are cut to allow the fruit to naturally dehydrate as the vine sustains itself by absorbing water from the bunches. Tahbilk also produces a stone-fruit and blossom-forward Viognier, a varietal introduced in the 1990s.

The other great Rhône grape, Shiraz, is made into three single-varietal wines, all recognised for their heady fruit and spice nose and powerful concentrated layers. The 1860 Vines Shiraz comes from those 150-year-old plantings and has deep blackcurrant fruit with cigar-box maturity to it. There is also a special bin release called ESP (Eric Stevens Purbrick), a label also applied to the best of Tahbilk's Cabernet Sauvignon cuvées.

Tahbilk is also one of the best destination wineries in the world. As well as the cellar and vineyard tours you'd expect, and a fine café, it offers tours of its gardens, with its modern landscaping but ancient trees, and boat tours of the billabongs. That 22-hour flight doesn't seem as long with all that at the end of it.

Discover our full range of Tahbilk wines online, including Tahbilk Shiraz, Viognier and Marsanne.