

2016 Spitting Spider Chardonnay

Dowie Doole, McLaren Vale, Australia

Product details

Vintage:	2016	Drinking:	2017
Producer:	Dowie Doole	Alcohol:	13%
Region:	McLaren Vale	Variety:	Chardonnay
Country:	Australia		

About the producer

DOWIE DOOLE WINES

In 1995, two neighbouring South Australian growers, Drew Dowie and Norm Doole, sat down together to celebrate the end of another successful harvest with a hearty breakfast washed down with a McLaren Vale Shiraz. However, their conversation revealed their dissatisfaction with waving off the last trucks to wineries up the road. Like sending children away to school, letting go of those they had nurtured was becoming too hard. There and then, they decided to join forces and start their own winery - and establish it as one of the best in McLaren Vale.

They strengthened their hand by bringing in a third grower, Leigh Gilligan, in 1998, and soon gained an international reputation, with classic Dowie Doole McLaren Vale wines that are more elegant and refined than mainstream Australian wines. Winemaker Chris Thomas began working for the Dowie Doole winery as a consultant in 2008, before joining full-time in 2011 and taking up the role of general manager two years later. When the founders decided to scale back their day-to-day involvement in 2015, it was Thomas who gathered investors to take the winery to the next stage of its development, becoming managing director in the process.

Armit Wines has exclusively imported Dowie Doole wines to the UK for over 10 years and has been lucky enough to work with Drew Dowie and Norm Doole, and Chris Thomas alike.

The founders can still be found managing the vineyards they brought into Dowie Doole in the first place: Drew Dowie and Lulu Lunn's Tintookie, Norm and Jane Doole's Cali Road and Leigh and Jen Gilligan's Rifle Range, as well as the Dooles' vineyard at Kuitpo in the Adelaide Hills, just east of McLaren Vale. Thomas works closely with all of them.

Dowie Doole Shiraz offers are a journey into this complex grape, which tends to grow relatively small in McLaren Vale and offers complexity despite its soft feel in the mouth. The far-from-basic Dowie Doole Shiraz is a deep crimson colour and has the unmistakable McLaren Vale Shiraz bouquet: sweet plums, dark cherries, cloves, spices, and toasty oak characters showing through. The palate is rich and full with layers of dark fruits, licorice and plums and has a fine, velvety tannin structure, with 18 months in oak adding spice. In the best years, the Reserve expresses dark chocolate, dark fruits and dark spices within a lattice of tannin giving it marvelous longevity. There are also single-vineyard and single-plot releases such as the bold, spicy California Road and Scarce Earth - as its name suggests, earthy with leather and perfume on the nose. Moxie is a sparkling Shiraz - velvety cherries and blackcurrants with just the right level of sweetness. The flavours, as well as the distinct characteristics of this sparkling Shiraz make it a truly unique wine. Dowie Doole's second label, Spitting Spider - classified as South Australia as it uses some grapes from outside McLaren Vale - has an excellent value Shiraz that could convert the arachnophobic.



While McLaren Vale is best known for its production of Shiraz, the region's huge variation in soil types, Mediterranean four-seasons climate and proximity to the ocean (on St Vincent's Gulf, south of Adelaide) and its breezes, mean that it suits many grape varieties. The scope of Dowie Doole's production reflects this, not only with single-variety bottlings - McLaren Vale Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc (plus single-vineyard Tintookie Chenin Blanc), Vermentino, Cane Cut Viognier and Spitting Spider South Australia Chardonnay - but also with blends. Hooley Dooley combines the Cabernet Sauvignon bouquet of blackcurrant and mint with dark berried, spicy Shiraz and Merlot's soft red fruits. The playful G&T stands for Grenache and Tempranillo, medium-bodied and elegantly spicy over early summer fruits. And under the name of one of the founders, Gilligan, there is a red blend of Shiraz, Grenache and Mourvèdre and a white pairing of Roussanne and Marsanne.

In 2016, the new investment meant a significant expansion, more than doubling the estate with the acquisition of the Conte family's 53-hectare Tatachilla vineyard on the St Vincent Gulf coastal edge of McLaren Vale. Around 35 hectares are planted to classic regional grape varieties - Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Dowie Doole Merlot and bush vine Grenache which is over 50 years old. However, the remainder is planted with Vermentino, Aglianico and Lagrein - a reflection of the Italian heritage of the previous owner. The first harvest of these vines under Dowie Doole's viticultural control is the 2017 vintage and we await the outcome, and a further expansion of the offerings from this South Australian producer, with interest.

Browse our full selection of Dowie Doole wines online today.