
Richard Hamilton Wine Group



RICHARD HAMILTON
WINES

Grapegrowing in the Hamilton family dates back to 1837 when Richard Hamilton (1792-1852) took out Land Order 449 in the colony of South Australia. After a swift journey from England on the Katherine Stewart Forbes, he arrived with his wife and eight children on October 17, 1837. Shortly after his arrival he planted the first vineyards on the Adelaide plains which formed the foundations of the Hamilton Ewell Wine Company. Initial vine plantings required herculean efforts to clear the land with hand, horse, axe and fore. Subsequent plantings saw the harvesting of traditional varieties - Shiraz and Grenache. A small number of these gnarled old vines still bear fruit today in some of the world's last urban vineyards in Marion, Adelaide. By the 1850s Richard's third son Henry Hamilton (1826-1907) was planting additional vineyards and established his wine cellars, securing a significant local market for Hamilton Wines. Within 20 years, Henry had won the Angus Award twice for agricultural farms, awarded annually by the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society. Frank Hamilton (1859-1913) joined his father in the vineyard and winemaking business in 1875 and managed it from around 1890. During these years, Frank produced a Chablis-style, dry white wine. In 1928, his son Sydney pioneered Hamilton's Moselle. In order to retain natural acidity, the grapes were picked early, and fermented in closed wooden vats instead of the usual open cement tanks. This was a milestone in Australian winemaking. A noted oenologist, Sydney Hamilton spent over 30 years as winemaker with Hamilton Vineyards. In the mid 1930s Sydney began experimenting with cold fermentation techniques and went on to use a refrigerated cellar to control the fermentation in the production of quality Germanic-style white wine. Later he used mechanical refrigeration to chill must prior to fermentation. These pioneering techniques allowed for the preservation of delicate aromas and flavours in white wines and have become the hallmark of Australian vinification. Burton Hamilton (1904-1994), fourth son of Frank Hamilton, was a born viticulturist who spent almost 90 years cultivating vines and producing grapes for his family company. Burton was a pioneer of Australian viticulture with a strong belief in hand tending his vines from pruning to picking. He began establishing vineyards in McLaren Vale in 1947 and was a great believer in the quality of the region. It is the legacy of Burton's 1970 vintages and hand-tended old vineyards that see the company in the strong position it is today. In 1972 Burton Hamilton's son Richard established a small winery in McLaren Vale and gradually began to build up the family's vineyard holdings, under the watchful eye of his father. Richard honed his skills as a winemaker under the guidance of Burton, Uncle Sydney and French winemaker Maurice Ou, and throughout the 1970s produced a number of award winning wines. As a fifth generation direct descendant Dr Hamilton now perpetuates the Hamilton family's 168-year involvement in the wine industry. Many of the wines produced today reflect the history of the Hamilton Wine Company, including: Almond Grove Chardonnay - the old track behind our Chardonnay vineyard is named Almond Grove. In the 1840s, when Edward Loud was importing French vines into Willunga, settlers planted almonds around their homes. In the early 1930s -shortly before the arrival of Burton Hamilton in McLaren Vale - the Almond Grove Company was formed and almonds in the region flourished. Lot 148 Merlot - one of the assistants working with the Surveyor-General's party on the early surveys of the colony of SA was John Hamilton, the fourth son of Richard Hamilton. While surveying the area around the Sturt River, John observed that the land marked Lot 148 was some of the most fertile he had seen and was able to secure it for his father, who planted it to vineyards. Cuttings from these original 160-year-old vines have traditionally been used to establish our vineyards in McLaren Vale. Hut Block Cabernet Sauvignon - the Hut Block Cabernet Sauvignon is made from grapes grown on our McLaren Vale vineyard named after the old 'pickers' hut on the property. The original vines of the Hut Block were carefully nurtured by Richard Hamilton's father, Burton. Gumpr's Block Shiraz - Gumpr's Hotel, established in 1851, was the original name of the Salopian Inn, which sits diagonally opposite our vineyard. Richard Hamilton Single Vineyard story Centurion - 12 rows of our Shiraz vines, which date back over a century, are individually harvested and vinified to produce this rare and distinguished wine.