

THE ART OF SUSTAINABILITY

I've been lucky enough to spend lots of time walking the rows in the Holy Grail Vineyard with MT lately, and what has really resonated is the passion, dedication and drive to ensure our vines survive the long haul.



You could say that each vine is treated like one of the family. Each tendril is given the same TLC as one of Travis' or MT's children. Each being given the best possible opportunity in order to shine and produce amazing fruit year on year.

As with most things across our company, we don't leave much to chance... yet to some extent, in the vineyard, when it comes to weather and climate, we're in the hands of the Gods. Thus, a careful and managed approach to managing weather extremes is paramount - MT and Travis and our amazing viti team of Alex and John have this covered.

The growing season of Vintage 2020 was one of the driest to date and it was fascinating to see first hand the measures the team took to ensure that we managed this challenging season from the ground up and to ensure the sustainability.

SOIL HEALTH IS KEY

It's no secret that you are what you eat - Like us; plants thrive in soil that is healthful and teeming with life. Vines will struggle in soils that are inert and lifeless, as do we when we don't include fruits, veggies and wholegrains regularly in our diet. Each year the team use 540 bails of straw mulch under our vines to keep the soil temperature and surface roots cool as well as retain valuable moisture in the soil. The mulch also promotes earthworm and soil microbe activity in our soil and also sees a reduction in weed growth which in turn lowers the need for harsh herbicides. In winter, the team plants diverse cover crops between the rows to promote soil vitality.

Our gorgeous Scottish Highland cattle aren't just there for their good looks either! Brutus and his family as well as 100% of the grape must from harvest contribute to the 300 tonnes of organic compost we add back into our vineyards each year, in order to support the natural balance within our vines.



WASH YOUR FEET

It seems silly to talk about security in terms of winegrowing, but Bio-Security in our vineyards is paramount in order to prevent the spread of serious soil diseases. Most notable of these soil diseases is phylloxera; a horrible bug that lives in soils and feasts on healthy vine roots.

This tiny beast decimated the vineyards of France in the late 19th Century and is still present in some areas of NSW and Victoria. All guests who join our Vineyard Experiences and visitors to any of our vineyards are requested to wash shoes in chlorine baths to ensure that the spread of disease is mitigated. Unbeknownst to most of us, shoes and tyres can spread pests and diseases that could wreak havoc to the health and success of our vineyards in Barossa.



WEAR SUNSCREEN

The Holy Grail Vineyard in summer has a distinct white and blue hue. This is not an alien phenomenon, it is Kaolin Clay Spray, which the team applies 2-3 times during the ripening period to protect the bunch zone from the harsh sun. Essentially Kaolin is 50+ for grapes. The white Kaolin reflects light from the skins, and sees a reduction in temperature by 5-6 degrees on the berries. Maybe we should all start wearing zinc?



NOT ALL VARIETIES ARE CREATED EQUAL

We've planted our Holy Grail vineyard to varieties that perform well in Barossa's climate. It's a well known fact that the best Pinot Noirs and Aussie sparkling wines are made in our cool climates like Tasmania and Mornington Peninsula. While we love those wines, the reality is, varieties like Shiraz, Grenache and Mataro perform perfectly in our hot and windy climates in South Australia.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA IS THE DRIEST STATE
IN THE WORLD'S DRIEST CONTINENT.**

GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY

Each of our estate vineyards are cane pruned to reduce the risk of the fungus infection Eutypa Lata, and also assists the vines to survive our warm summers. Cane pruning, and pruning our Sur Echelas blocks and contoured bush vines must be done by hand in order to choose the most robust cane to grow new shoots for the next vintage.

Our Holy Grail Vineyard is also trained and picked by hand to minimise tractor movements and avoid soil compaction.

ASPECT MATTERS

Our Holy Grail Vineyard is planted east to west which allows the bunch zone of our vines to be shaded by the harsh afternoon summer sun. If we had chosen to plant our rows North to South, the bunches would have a high chance of being burnt in the middle of the ripening period, which would see fast and furious ripening, rather than slow and consistent which allows true phenolic ripeness of the whole bunch, which is key to the quality wines we strive for.

WATER IS PRECIOUS

South Australia is the driest state in the world's driest continent. Barossa has suffered considerably from dry winters of late, and our water tables have dropped. In 2019, MT and Travis implemented a ground-breaking piece of tech to monitor Sap-Flow in our Holy Grail vineyard. Essentially with this technology, we can monitor the vines water use - or transpiration - in real time via an App. This means we can apply irrigation when the vines actually need it rather than guessing or watering 'just in case' before a heatwave. Already we've reduced our water use by almost 30% and the quality of fruit we've seen this year is sensational.

All these things combined, and many more, certainly create a magical alchemy in our vineyards.



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