

Meshach William Burge (1843-1942) was my great grandfather and a central figure in establishing the Burge family's winemaking tradition. He was 11 when his family moved from Hillcot, in Wiltshire, England, to the Barossa Valley and established what has grown into a thriving viticultural, wheat and sheep property near Lyndoch. In the late 1860s, under his father's watchful eye, Meshach began winemaking.

In tribute, I have selected my finest shiraz to bear his name and be my flagship wine. Since the first vintage in 1988, Meshach has won several of Australia's top trophies and many medals. It is generally regarded as one of the country's best dry reds.

THE FRUIT

The shiraz for this wine was harvested by hand from 80-year-old vines on our highly regarded Filsell Vineyard, at the southern end of the Barossa, near Lyndoch. These vines produce fruit with great *concentration and power* especially when the grapes are allowed, as in this case, to ripen to about 14° Baumé.

THE WINEMAKING

The grapes were crushed and the juice fermented down to about 1- 1.5 Baumé on skins over a period of seven days in five-to-seven tonne fermenters. After pressing, the juice was transferred to *new American oak hogsheads* to finish fermentation. The wine was matured in these barrels for 24 months before bottling. It was then aged in the bottle for two-and-a-half years before release.

(1998 Meshach SHIRAZ)

With Meshach I am seeking the epitome of the Barossa shiraz style - a big, powerful, intensely rich and robust dry red with the potential to age for 20-25 years and develop enormous complexity. The 1998 vintage was a truly exceptional one in the Barossa - the best I've encountered in more than 30 years of making wine in the district - and produced outstanding reds with greater intensity and depth of fruit flavour than we've ever achieved before. This is a big wine in every sense. It has a big tannin structure, huge fruit but as always with Meshach showing vinosity rather than obvious varietal character, and great complexity from 22 months in new small American oak.

