

THE FRUIT

Semillon has long been one of the major varieties in the Barossa and is ideally suited to the district's soils and climate. The grapes for Zerk Semillon come **from vines more than 70 years old** on Robert and Janine Zerk's vineyard in the Lyndoch Valley region of the Barossa. These aged vines produce fruit with great depth, richness and complexity of flavour and I believe we've captured those characters in this wine. The 2001 vintage was an excellent one all round despite some difficulties because of heat.

THE WINEMAKING

The grapes were harvested at about 13° Baumé. Some of the fruit was whole-bunch pressed to increase the fineness of the wine. After crushing and draining, the juice was transferred to stainless-steel tanks for initiation of fermentation. The gentle, controlled action of our tank presses ensured that the **pressings were of immensely high quality** and could mostly be blended with the free-run juice. This allowed us to build the flavour of the wine without increasing the phenolic content.

At 7-8° Baumé the juice was transferred to a mix of 40 per cent French and 60 per cent American oak for completion of fermentation. About half the oak was new, the rest one-year-old. The wine was matured on yeast lees in the same barrels for five months, with regular stirring (batonage) and rolling of barrels **ensuring maximum extraction of these secondary flavours**. Our increasing use of these techniques, developed making RBS Semillon under our experimental program, have built greater complexity and softness into Zerk without suppressing the fruit flavours.

(2 0 0 1 Z e r k SEMILLON).

The effect of fermentation and on-lees maturation in oak is to soften the young semillon and give the wine complexity, while not suppressing the very attractive citrus-like freshness. The result is an appealing dry white with full, bright yellow colour, and a complex bouquet of fresh citrus and integrated oak. The palate is fresh and crisp, showing fine, zesty citrus flavours balanced by a rich, creamy softness. This generously flavoured wine will mature well for at least 7-8 years but will show extra character and complexity after just another year in the bottle.

