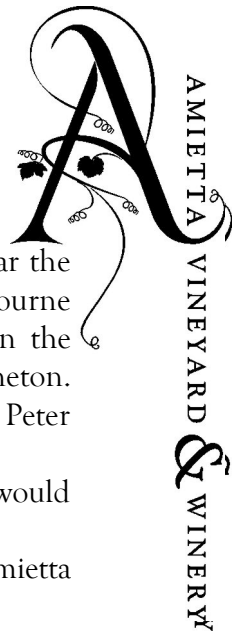


Info from Amietta: Shiraz-Lagrein



Lag-what?

Lagrein (pronounced **La-grain**) is a rare red grape variety from the Alto Adige region in the far northeast of Italy (on the Austrian border) where it is grown in one small area near the city of Bolzano. In Australia, the variety was pioneered by Dr Peter May of Melbourne University's Burnley Campus who, having discovered a couple of vines were growing in the CSIRO 'vine library' at Merbein in northeast Victoria, planted some in his garden at Kyneton. On his recommendation, Alan Cooper of Cobaw Ridge planted the variety using cuttings Peter supplied and the wine has since become the flagship wine of Cobaw Ridge.

In 2002, Peter May gave us cuttings from his vines, along with the suggestion that Lagrein would make an excellent wine if blended with quality cool climate Shiraz. He was right!

In Australia there are now about a dozen vineyards where Lagrein is grown. Currently, Amietta is the only commercial producer of a Shiraz-Lagrein blend in the world.

Lagrein at Amietta

Amietta is on the edge of the Moorabool Valley on the (warm) north side of Geelong. Within a 5 kilometre strip, the neighbouring vineyards along the valley are *Bannockburn Vineyards*, by *Farr*, *Clyde Park* and *Amietta*. At Amietta, our vineyard soils are a black version of the red Coonawarra soils: we have a thin layer of black clay over the top of limestone, in the Coonawarra they have a thin layer of red clay over limestone.

Although we are in a cool-climate region, our valley-side "Terrace Block" where the reds are grown, is a warm, sun-trapping site protected from the prevailing cool southwesterly winds. The site receives 1450 degree-days of sunshine – about the same as Bordeaux and Margaret River.

Viticulture: Lagrein vines are vigorous with bushy drooping canes – which is the complete opposite of the erect vertical canes that grow on Shiraz. The vines produce small numbers of bunches but the bunches are large. As our goal is to retain violet/floral perfumed characters and avoid excessive/harsh tannins, we position the shoots so that the ripening fruit grows in dappled sunlight rather than in full direct sunshine. The vines are cane-pruned (by hand of course) and hand picked at approximately 13.5° Beaumé. Lagrein ripens at Amietta about 1-2 weeks after Shiraz and 5-10 days before Cabernet Sauvignon. We crop it at about 1 tonne per acre.

Winemaking: Understanding and being able to work with the high natural acidity and tannin levels of Lagrein is the key to making the wine. The grapes are fully de-stemmed and 'wild' fermented as whole berries which provides some carbonic maceration/enhanced berry fruit character. Fermentation temperature is kept below 26 °C to minimise tannin extraction. The wine is pressed off the skins early and the last part of fermentation is completed in barrels. The wine is racked off heavy solids, sulphured and barrel aged for 14 months in **Saury** water bent medium toast barrels (these are more commonly usually used for Pinot and Chardonnay). The wine is blended pre-bottling (35% Lagrein+65% Shiraz).

2007 Amietta Shiraz-Lagrein

Our blend of the rare Italian grape variety **Lagrein** with Shiraz has produced a rich, medium bodied, satisfying wine that cascades across the palate with flavours of spicy dark plums, musky rose blossom and blackberry with savoury notes of leather, mushroom and tobacco leaf. A finely balanced wine underpinned by earthy *terroir* characters. A world-first blend of these varieties and a wine that is rapidly making a mark. Only 80 cases of this wine were produced.

Amietta is a hands-on, family owned and run micro-boutique winery. All Amietta wines are grown, hand-picked, hand-made and bottled at Amietta Vineyard and Winery, on the edge of the Moorabool Valley, Geelong. Winemakers: Janet Cockbill and Nicholas Clark.