

YOUR GUIDE TO

CELLARING WINE



St. Hugo™



1850
St. Hugo
CHONARADIA
CABERNET SAUVIGNON
2010

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YOUR CELLARING HANDBOOK

Ageing wines and following the journey of how a taste profile evolves over time is one of the most rewarding aspects of wine appreciation.

This guide offers an introduction into how to age wines with optimal cellaring conditions.

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WHAT WINES SHOULD YOU CELLAR?

Tasting the exact same wine at various stages throughout its lifetime is the only way to properly understand the gentle evolution it undergoes as a result of bottle ageing.

AGEING AND CHANGING

As a wine ages, its vibrant, fresh 'primary' fruit characters begin to develop into more complex characters such as leather, tobacco, cocoa and dried fruits.

The tannins soften and become **finer**, and they are felt further back

on your palate. For many people, this makes aged wines more approachable and enticing than younger wines.

CELLARING SUGGESTION

If you can afford to stock your cellar with six or twelve bottles of the same wine, this will give you the opportunity to taste them over the course of a decade or so.

You'll see firsthand the journey a wine goes on, helping you learn at which stage in the ageing process you most enjoy your wines.



Coonawarra Cabernet is among Australia's most age-worthy wine styles.

AGE-WORTHY WINES

There is plenty of information available online about which vintages are considered the most age-worthy in key Australian wine regions such as Coonawarra, but to take things a step further, **it helps to understand the attributes a wine requires to be suitable for cellaring.**

In general, quality wines that are well balanced and highly drinkable in their youth will remain so as they mature.

They require:

- **Strong primary fruit characters**
- **Fine and persistent tannins**
- **Oak that supports, rather than dominates**

Where cellaring is concerned, it is preferable that the character of a wine be more restrained overall, rather than full of opulent fruit character yet lacking the tannin structure to drive it. Nor is it desirable for cellaring to have a wine that is high in tannin but lacking in fruit, which will become softer and drier with ageing.

Coonawarra Cabernet is among Australia's most age-worthy wine styles.

St Hugo Cabernet Sauvignon is crafted to cellar for a minimum of 10 to 15 years, but the best vintages have the potential to go considerably further.



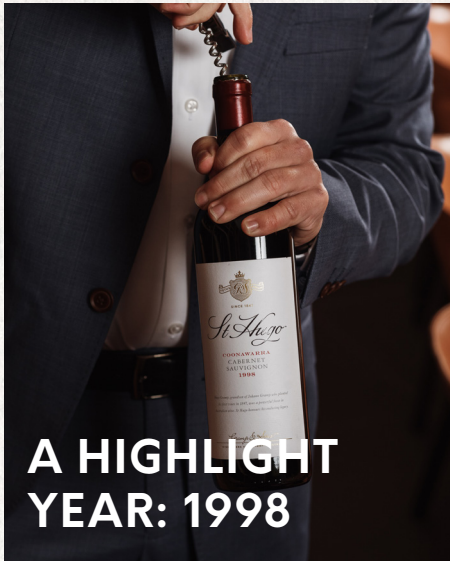
BIGGER IS BETTER

The size of the bottle itself will influence how fast a wine matures.

Large format bottles such as magnums have the same surface area for air transfer through either a cork or screwcap, but the volume

of wine inside is much larger, which allows less exposure to oxygen.

As such, larger format wines such as 1.5L Magnums age significantly slower than those in the traditional 750ml bottle, making them very well suited to extended cellaring.



A HIGHLIGHT YEAR: 1998

The 1998 vintage has been widely acclaimed as one of the truly great years for Coonawarra Cabernet.

Grape-growing conditions were ideal, with warm and dry weather in the months prior to harvest leading to stylish, concentrated flavours and strong colours.

Vineyards were harvested with grapes exhibiting a balance between rich fruit character and a full tannin profile that ensured suitability for longer ageing.

"I've been in the fortunate position of being able to taste the 1998 St Hugo Cabernet over the years at various stages of its maturity. This great wine is absolutely at the peak of its drinking."

Chief Winemaker Peter Munro

2010 vs 2016

A comparison of St Hugo Cabernet from two similar vintages gives valuable insight into the effects of bottle ageing.

Peter suggests that if you look at the 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon now as a young wine and compare it to the 2010, you can see roughly how it's going to evolve over the next six years.



Both the 2010 and 2016 seasons started with decent winter rains ensuring good crop levels, and warm (rather than hot) weather at the end of the growing season enabled full development of the fruit flavours.

The result is two well balanced wines with the 2010 now showing softer tannins after 10 years of ageing.



CREATING THE PERFECT CELLAR

There's a certain romance about cellaring wine.

Perusing the labels of bottles in your collection evokes memories of the moment in your life when the wine was acquired.

Nostalgia aside, there are educational benefits. Cellaring is a discipline that undoubtedly helps expand your drinking repertoire by giving you a better understanding of what you enjoy drinking.

KEEP IT STEADY

Constant temperature is the most important thing when it comes to storing wine.

Extreme temperature variation will age a wine more quickly. This may not be a terrible thing; you may just be tasting a seven-year-old wine that would taste the same at 15 years' of age, had it been stored perfectly.

With sub-optimal storage, your drinking window becomes a lot shorter and you might miss some wines at their peak, if you aren't tasting them regularly enough.

Storing wine where the temperature is constantly warmer than the recommended optimum temperature (eg 20°C) is not ideal, but is still preferable to a location where it swings from cold (14°C) to hot (25°C).

CELLARING OPTIONS

With apartment living on the rise, few people today have the appropriate space to set up the typical underground cellar.

There are lots of ways you can cellar wine, ranging from very approachable, to ultra-specialist options. These include:

- **Purchasing a wine fridge** is a compact option for storing your wine bottles on their sides at a cool, steady temperature
- **Cellaring off-site** with a specialist wine storage provider. This has the added benefit of keeping it out of easy reach!
- **Finding a cool, dark spot** at home to create a cellar-like environment, e.g. under stairs





VISUAL INSPECTION

If a wine is stored under cork, there may be visual indicators of the speed at which it is ageing.

'Ullage' is the amount of headspace between the wine and the cork. The fill level will slowly decrease during ageing as the liquid expands and contracts in the bottle, and some wine is lost through cork absorption and evaporation.

If the fill level is lower in a particular example of the same wine, it suggests either that the bottle has not been stored ideally, or that its cork is allowing more air than usual to seep into the bottle.

It's best you open and drink a wine exhibiting significant ullage as it is unlikely to improve with further cellaring.

Wines under screwcap should age identically with their fill level remaining unchanged.





TOP STORAGE TIPS

1. Ideal cellar conditions have a max temperature of 15°C, but it's most important to ensure your wines are kept in a location that has a **constant temperature**.
2. **Minimise exposure to light**, as ultraviolet rays and heat will cause wine to age more rapidly.
3. Bottles with corks must be **kept lying down** so that the wine remains in contact with the cork, stopping it from drying out and shrinking.
4. Continue to check on the progress of your wine, either by visually inspecting, or by **opening and tasting every year or two**.
5. Our hot tip for an ideal cellar situation is to make sure it is **out of reach** and hide what you don't want guests to find!



A CONSIDERED COLLECTION

CURATING YOUR PERSONAL CELLAR

If you are only just embarking on your cellaring journey, it's best to keep an open mind and have a good cross-section of different wines in your cellar.

Your palate and preferences will develop and change over time so be

sure to give yourself some options when starting a cellar and allow yourself to experience a few different wine styles to taste over the years. It can be fascinating to reflect upon how you've changed in the same period of time since you first bought the wine.

CELEBRATE MILESTONES

Cellaring wine from a memorable year is a wonderful way of celebrating key milestones with family and friends.

Choosing great vintages from leading producers is vital here. If you are buying a wine from your child's birth year that you want to last until you can drink it with them when they turn 18 – and potentially at a few more birthdays in their 20s and 30s – it needs to be built for the long haul.

Larger format bottles such as magnums are particularly conducive to extended ageing for such momentous occasions.

CONSIDER THE VINTAGE

Some of the most exceptional years to look out for in the Barossa were the 1985, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2015 vintages.

"Vintages will sometimes give you naturally more elegant wines, or sometimes more powerful wines – I see it as a spectrum. We obviously aim for right in the middle where we think that balance is, but the vintage will change it year to year slightly."



When looking at varietals, it's hard to go past the cellaring capability of the Cabernet Sauvignon which will generally age longer and more gracefully, and a great Shiraz can also go the distance.

If you set out to choose wines that have a strong pedigree and read expert opinions about their likely drinking windows, this should help you to make informed purchases.

WINE AS AN INVESTMENT

If you are treating your wine as an investment, there is all the more reason to ensure it is cellared in optimal conditions.

Buyers will pay more for wine if they can feel assured the wine is in good health, and if the exterior packaging is in mint condition. Wrapping bottles in cling film helps keep labels firmly affixed.

The Langton's Classification of Australian Wine is the ultimate guide to local fine wines.

Through their ranking system, Langton's provides an indicator of

the likely market demand for a wine at auction and is a great resource for investors.

Langton's classifies St Hugo Cabernet as 'Excellent', confirming its reputation for ageing superbly.

If you are treating your wine as an investment, there is all the more reason to ensure it is cellared in optimal conditions.







WHY DECANT YOUR WINE

Contrary to popular belief, it is actually younger wines (five years of age, or less) that benefit the most from being decanted.

Acidity feels sharper and tannins are more assertive when a wine is in its youth.

Exposing it to oxygen helps soften these hard edges and allows the wine's layers of complexity to emerge.

Decanting a wine prior to drinking helps speed up this process.

However, we recommend to do so no more than an hour before drinking, as the wine will begin to lose its aromatics once it is out of the bottle.

For younger wines, use a decanter that will expose the largest possible surface area of the wine to oxygen.

After so many years in bottle, older wines (15+ years) can be quite fragile, so their aromatics can disintegrate quite rapidly once decanted and therefore typically need less oxygen to show their true colours.

However, decanting of older wines is still very necessary in order to separate the sediment from the wine.

DECANTING OLDER WINES

- Choose a decanter with a narrow neck that minimises exposure to oxygen
- Pour the wine slowly so that any sediment is caught in the bottle neck
- Put on your favourite music and
- Consume as soon as possible after decanting.





CHOOSING THE PERFECT GLASSWARE

The right glassware is key to enhancing your drinking experience, and it is a lovely part of the ritual of serving and enjoying wine.

There are a few considerations when choosing the right glassware for your wine:

- Classic **tulip-shaped** glasses enable you to swirl the wine without spilling it, releasing its aromas. The narrower outlet also helps focus the wine's bouquet towards your nose.
- Larger glasses with a **wider bowl** expose the wine to more oxygen, which is useful for bigger red wine styles such as Cabernet Sauvignon that require aeration to 'open up'.
- Smaller glasses with **narrower openings** help focus the more delicate aromas of leaner whites such as Riesling.

If you want a glass that is suitable as an all-rounder, choose one with a medium bowl, somewhere in between these two extremes.

- **Stemmed glasses** are preferable as they prevent your hand from warming the glass, and therefore the wine.
- **Fine glassware** delivers the wine more directly to the front of your palate than glasses with thicker rims.



ST HUGO FINE AND RARE COLLECTION

Giving wine lovers unprecedented access to some of St Hugo's most outstanding back vintages.

Stored in carefully monitored conditions at our winery in the Barossa, these back vintage wines from **1998, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010** have been hand selected after rigorous tasting and review by our Chief Winemaker, before selection for re-release.

"The 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 are all excellent examples expressing the individual vintage conditions and will continue to develop further complexity over the coming decade," Peter says.



To get you started with aged wines, the Fine and Rare Collection is now available for purchase through select wine merchants, [online store](#) and via our [Wine Club](#).

MEET YOUR PERSONAL CELLARING CONCIERGE

By purchasing wines from our Fine and Rare Collection, you will unlock access to St Hugo's Cellaring Concierge, Tim Redman.

This service allows you to put your cellaring questions directly to Tim via email or by booking an online consultation for personalised advice about the wines and your private cellar.

THE FINE AND RARE EXPERIENCE

For Wine Club members we offer a new Fine and Rare Experience

designed for those wanting an in-depth introduction to collecting and a bespoke cellaring plan based on their personal tastes. Of all the experiences St Hugo has to offer, this has the highest level of personalisation and is hosted by both Peter and Tim, available either virtually or at our Barossa Cellar Door.

For more information on our Cellaring Concierge service, visit our website sthugo.com





ABOUT ST HUGO

St Hugo creates some of Australia's most distinctive fine wines, renowned for their power and elegance.

Since the first 1980 vintage, we have been renowned for our flagship Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon, a wine that has been **awarded gold for every vintage since.**

Our name honours the legacy of Barossa winemaking legend Hugo Gramp who led the winery through its most pivotal stage of growth and

established its reputation as a producer of some of Australia's most highly sought-after fine wines.

Impeccably balanced and concentrated, St Hugo Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon is a mainstay of many Australian cellars, earning its longstanding inclusion in the Langton's Classification of Australian Fine Wine.



We are known for our house style of power and elegance, producing more medium-bodied, red-fruited and floral style of Cabernet than many of our peers, which tend to be darker and more full-bodied in character.

Prized by collectors and connoisseurs the world over for their depth, intensity and complexity, the critically acclaimed St Hugo wines all have exceptional cellaring potential.





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