



MUSCAT OF
RUTHERGLEN

UNIQUE.
INTENSE. RICH.
SENSUOUS.

Carefully crafted from over 100 years of
rare stocks, family secrets and skills.

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A photograph of two men in a dimly lit cellar. The man on the left, wearing a dark jacket with a 'CHAMPION' patch, holds a glass of red wine and smiles. The man on the right, wearing a brown sweater over a checkered shirt, looks at the wine. The background shows wooden barrels and cellar walls.

Muscat of Rutherglen is an Australian treasure, impossible to replicate as it contains the essence and artistry of multiple generations. It is lovingly handcrafted from aged stocks, nurtured by generations of Rutherglen winemakers in their unique climate. The resulting wines are intense, rich and sensuous.



Muscat of Rutherglen is a world-recognised and critically-acclaimed wine style unique to Rutherglen, with a proud history spanning over 100 years of family winemaking. The blending skills required to produce this rare gem have been passed down from generation to generation, with winemakers plying their craft so that they can share their skills and artistry with Muscat lovers from all over the world.

Muscat of Rutherglen is a Muscat style like no other; thanks to the unique combination of climate, grape variety, soils and architecture, but most of all, the reserved stocks and unsurpassed blending skills.

Made from Muscat à Petits Grains Rouge, Muscat of Rutherglen wines are rich, complex and intense, pairing excellently with a variety of savoury dishes, full-flavoured cheeses and desserts, but they also stand heroically on their own, over ice as an aperitif or mixed in cocktails. The strength of the wine style lies in its versatility and the mystery that comes with uncovering its essence.

There is no other drink on earth that compares. It captures all that is good about Australia with few wines able to elicit a response upon first tasting quite like Muscat of Rutherglen – intense, rich, sensuous and memorable.

Muscat of Rutherglen stands out in a crowd, proudly offering those keen to taste it a depth of flavour, texture and complexity like no other. It offers a highly sophisticated and diverse drinking experience that in many ways belies the rural surrounds of the region in which it is produced.

Muscat of Rutherglen wines are grouped into a ladder of classifications that mark a progression in richness, complexity, age and intensity of flavour. The four classifications are: Rutherglen Muscat, Classic Rutherglen Muscat, Grand Rutherglen Muscat and Rare Rutherglen Muscat. Only wines that meet the requirements of this classification system are awarded the much sought-after Muscat of Rutherglen stamp of authenticity. The classifications exist to ensure people choose the best Muscat to suit the occasion.

There is even a dedicated Muscat of Rutherglen glass personally chosen by Georg Riedel – 10th generation of family-owned global glass company Riedel.

Muscat of Rutherglen wines are intense, rich, sensuous and memorable; a national treasure that deserves to be retold in new ways to all wine lovers.

Rutherglen is the Muscat capital of the world, home to the unique Muscat of Rutherglen wine styles.

Visitors can take a journey along the region's 'Muscat Mile' to meet the master blenders – taste the different classifications of Muscat and indulge in some of the region's richest and rarest stocks straight from the barrel.

The historic Rutherglen Wine Region has left an indelible mark on Australian wine heritage and continues to shape the modern wine industry. The region's growers and winemakers form a close-knit community that's passionate about preserving age-old traditions while experimenting with new techniques and varieties that ensure this dynamic region continues to evolve.

THE RUTHERGLEN WINE REGION

Climate

Nestled in Victoria's High Country, among gentle hill lines running out of the Great Dividing Range and the Murray River, Rutherglen at 130-180m, has a classic Continental climate, with warm days in the ripening period occasionally reaching high temperatures in summer, and night temperatures moderated by the cool air flowing from the foothills of the nearby Victorian Alps, producing a large diurnal temperature difference. The average mean Jan temperature is 22.7°C. It is a dry heat, resulting in few issues with disease or mildew in normal years.

At a latitude of 36° 11' Rutherglen's rainfall is 580ml (23 inch) with most falling at the right times in winter and spring, allowing the vineyards to retain good subsoil moisture well into the growing period.

Most importantly, Rutherglen's autumn is long, warm and dry. This allows up to two weeks extended ripening over most other growing regions in the country. The growing season's weather conditions allow the grapes to fully ripen naturally, concentrating the sugars and flavours of the berries and maintaining the aromatic fruit flavours to produce rich luscious wines and the taste sensation only Muscat of Rutherglen wines can evoke.

Soil

Soils vary across Rutherglen, though there are three main soil types. In the northern band of the region closest to the Murray River, vines thrive in fine sandy loam, which exists where the river bank once ran. This well-draining soil typically produces floral wines with lower acidity and less tannin.

In the middle band of Rutherglen, on the lower slopes of the gentle hills, you'll find red loam over clay. Locally called 'Rutherglen Loam', this soil accounts for the majority of the region.

It is rich in minerals and has good moisture- holding ability, which is beneficial in Rutherglen's warm and dry climate. Much of the fruit for the region's famous fortified wines is grown on this band of loam, which snakes around the centre of the town and extends four kilometres to the east and west and five kilometres to the south.

Rutherglen's third major soil type contains bands of shale and quartz. This is a challenging profile for vines, producing intensely flavoured fruit.

Geography

The Murray River and a series of creeks, billabongs and lagoons snake through the region, contributing to soil moisture, and influencing weather patterns.

There are also a number of underground aquifers that contribute to sub soil moisture.

Vine Age

Vine age varies within the district, however most of the grapes are grown on vines of 20, 30, 50, up to 90 years of age. These mature vines grow grapes with intensity and richness of flavour.



THE MAKING OF MUSCAT OF RUTHERGLEN

There are more than 200 varieties of Muscat in the world but Rutherglen's wine producers only use the high-quality Muscat à Petits Grains Rouge (locally referred to as 'Rutherglen Brown Muscat'), renowned for its intense flavours due to the smaller berries providing more colour and flavour. The clones used are specific to Rutherglen and have been grown here for more than 140 years.

HARVEST

The amazing complexity of Muscat of Rutherglen begins in the vineyard where the fruit quality and sugar content of the harvested grapes are vital to the future blends. As fruit for these wines is left on the vine for an extended period, many factors can intervene and affect quality.

The Rutherglen vignerons draw on a diverse range of vineyards across the district – taking young, fruity material from ten year old Muscat vines, or wonderfully mellow fruit from low yielding vines of 40, 60 or even 90 years old, to bolster their blends with Muscat of exactly the required richness for each. The Rutherglen vignerons have learnt exactly how to extract the very best from their grapes, picking one block of vines early, or managing the yields of another through the use of selective pruning, or leaving another block of vines to mature long into autumn to gain maximum sugar and flavour.

Muscat production is not for the faint hearted. The vignerons must leave the grapes to ripen on the vine for as long as possible – risking spoilage by early autumn rains or botrytis. However, their rich harvest is worth the wait.

In good years, the sugar in the grapes may reach more than 20 degrees Baumé, and in most vintages will be harvested at 17 or 18 degrees Baumé – a very rich harvest. The importance of climate cannot be underestimated. For example, wet weather introduces mould with attendant rot and undesirable flavours. In contrast, weather which is too hot too quickly can induce excess evaporation leading to dry shrivel, before the flavour sugar acid balance can be developed. Hot weather can also burn off floral characters.

It is important to note, that Rutherglen's very reliable climate allows the sugar development on the vine (that is, not through mat-drying methods employed in other sweet fortified styles). It is the ripening of the fruit on the vine that provides the depth and intensity of Muscat flavour and the fruit lusciousness for which Rutherglen is famous.



WINEMAKING

Fermentation

In the winemaking process, the degree of ripeness, purity of flavour, the point of fermentation at which fortifying spirit is added and the quality and purity of that fortifying grape spirit all combine to produce the finished product.

The muscat juice is fermented on skins for a short period creating 1-2% alcohol before fermentation is stopped by the addition of fortifying spirit after pressing.

Extracting the syrupy juice from the fully ripened grapes is a painstaking and extremely sticky task – taking patience to press all the rich liquid from the raisined berries.

Selection for classification

Each vintage, grapes are picked in batches according to quality and the resultant wines are kept separate until their final quality can be assessed and a decision made regarding which classification they will join.

Maturation and blending

Contrary to popular belief, age is only one factor in determining the complexity of Muscat. As the stages of the classification increase, the number of vintages in the blend and the span of age between the oldest and youngest component wines will be greater. Nevertheless, these are merely two contributing factors.

Following fermentation, the new wines are placed in mature oak casks of various sizes, to allow the flavours of the Muscat to integrate and mature, but without the overt influence of new oak. In fact, the barrels are chosen on the basis that they will not impart any oak flavours to the wine – the barrels merely provide the medium for slow and gentle maturation. In other words, it is the flavour of fruit, not oak, which drives Rutherglen Muscat. The ratio of big or small oak casks depends on each winemaker's blending program, as the smaller the cask, the quicker the concentration and development of the wines. Sizes can range from 60-50,000 litres.

The placement of barrels can influence the speed of a wine's development, with wines from barrels at the top of a stack nearer the winery's roof where it is warmer, maturing faster than wine from barrels at the bottom nearer the cooler floor area.

The unique art form of maturing the Muscat of Rutherglen style (with each generation adding its own fingerprint) sees some wineries employ a modified solera system – an alternative blending and ageing process to ensure consistency across the classifications.

The solera system sees individual Muscat stocks graduate in an ageing process – from one stage to the next – with the young wine introduced at the earliest stage and the mature wine taken from the final stage for bottling.

Evaporation

Evaporation plays an important role in the maturation of the Muscats. On average the maturing casks lose 3-5% of their volume per year to the “angels”. Over 20 years the angels get half of every barrel. This evaporation makes the production of these wines a costly enterprise, but without this concentration through evaporation, these would not be the ‘world's richest wines’. Over the warmer months the air in the cellars is rich with the aroma of Muscat beginning its journey skyward. Look up, and you will see the dark deposits on the winery roofs - evidence of many years of the gradual migration of the wine out of the casks.

The skill of the winemaker in making and blending these wonderful wines has developed into an art form that only generations of experience and an innate knowledge of the qualities of their Muscats can deliver.

MUSCAT OF RUTHERGLEN CLASSIFICATION

Muscat of Rutherglen Classification System

Rutherglen Muscat is classified using a tiered system that indicates the level of complexity of the wine. The four descriptions mark a progression in richness, complexity, age and intensity of flavour. Age is only one factor in determining a wine's classification, but it does provide an important clue. Each producer of Muscat of Rutherglen has their own "House Style" within the classification system.

The MoR Stamp of Authenticity

The classified Muscat of Rutherglen wines bear a mark of authenticity – a trademark that is only applied to wines made from the great Muscat vineyards of the region, assuring the highest quality and adherence to classification.

RUTHERGLEN MUSCAT

Average age: 3-5 years

The foundation style displaying fresh fruit aromas, rich fruit on the palate, and great length of flavour.

Aromas

Muscat fruit, raisin, orange marmalade, floral

Flavours

Raisin, walnut, fruitcake

CLASSIC RUTHERGLEN MUSCAT

Average age: 6-10 years

Greater levels of richness and complexity; exhibiting the beginnings of mature wood aged characters produced from extended maturation in oak.

Aromas

Turkish delight, espresso

Flavours

Raisin, toffee, liquorice

GRAND RUTHERGLEN MUSCAT

Average age: 11-19 years

Takes the flavour of Rutherglen Muscat to a higher level of development; displaying a new level of intensity, depth, and concentration of flavour, mature wood aged characters, and a complexity that imparts layers of texture and flavour.

Aromas

Coffee, toffee, dark chocolate

Flavours

Christmas spice, roasted nuts, salted caramel, molasses

RARE RUTHERGLEN MUSCAT

Average age: in excess of 20 years

The pinnacle of the style, the richest and most complete wine – displaying deep colour, intense fruit and mature oak characters, rich viscous texture, and extraordinary depth of mellowed complex flavours.

Aromas

Christmas spice, coffee, chocolate, nuts

Flavours

Fruit cake, coffee bean, aged balsamic, dark chocolate



MUSCAT OF RUTHERGLEN MOMENTS

Muscat of Rutherglen is a rich, sophisticated, sensory and mystical drinking experience that truly reflects the layers of expertise and time that has gone into the production of every drop.

With a taste sensation that lingers on and is near impossible to replicate, Muscat of Rutherglen is often said to sit between a wine and a spirit, which gives the style its greatest strength: versatility.

The classification system assists drinkers to choose the best Muscat for each occasion where it is sure to enhance the flavour.

The new generation are pushing the boundaries with Muscat of Rutherglen.

Think the lighter **Rutherglen Muscat**, fresh and youthful with a subtle richness that lingers with each sip, enjoyed as an aperitif, on ice or mix it up in a refreshing cocktail with a difference. Serve it with canapés, dried fruit and nuts, fruit based desserts, panna cotta and sorbet.

Enjoy **Classic Rutherglen Muscat**, with a blended age of six to ten years, with savoury foods – soups, spicy curries and slow-cooked meats. Cheese is a natural match especially a creamy Brie, crumbly cheddar and pungent blue cheese.

The stronger **Grand Rutherglen Muscat**, blended from Muscat wines aged in barrels for anything between 11-19 years, is a perfect match to the flavours of terrine and pate, chocolate and chocolate-based desserts, rich butterscotch and caramel desserts. Enjoy it with a any strong cheese or, when trying to impress, serve it as an Affogato.

The pinnacle **Rare Rutherglen Muscat**, blended from Muscat wines in excess of 20 years of age and in many cases passed down through multiple generations, deserves to be sipped and savoured alone for pure pleasure to appreciate its intensity. It is history in a glass! Perhaps linger longer with a strong coffee or the finest dark chocolate.

A Muscat moment can be anything – relaxing on the couch sipping a glass of Rutherglen Muscat, book in hand; sharing a cheeky after dinner glass of Classic Rutherglen Muscat with a partner; unwinding in the bathtub, a glass of Grand Rutherglen Muscat perched on the vanity; or simply savouring some Rare Rutherglen Muscat for pure pleasure.

The Muscat of Rutherglen glass

The enjoyment of Muscat of Rutherglen is greatly enhanced by serving it in a large glass.

The Muscat of Rutherglen producers worked with George Riedel - the 10th generation of this famous varietal glassware family – to find the perfect glass.

The Riedel Muscat of Rutherglen glass is generous allowing appreciation of the complexities of this unique wine.

Muscat of Rutherglen is a national treasure that deserves to be shared with new wine drinkers.





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rare stocks, family secrets and skills.



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