

# Barossa Old Vine Charter

The Barossa is an exceptional and diverse viticultural region, with a profound history of grape growing and winemaking dating back to 1842. Acknowledged as one of the world's leading wine regions, it is home to some of the oldest vineyards in the world.

While a charter defining and categorizing Barossa Old Vines has been on the table for many years, it was never finalised. In 2007, it was Yalumba, the oldest continual family-owned winery in Australia that finally took up the challenge to recognise and celebrate these stalwarts of the wine world by declaring their own Old Vine Charter.

The Barossa-based winery's managing director, Robert Hill Smith, said, "The Old Vine Charter is dedicated to the recognition, preservation and promotion of these old vines, and we at Yalumba hope that this charter may play a small role in ensuring that in the unlikely event of another vine-pull scheme, it is not the oldest vines that are destroyed, as was the case in the 1980's."

This brave stance so inspired the Barossa wine community that, after extensive discussion, we endorsed the Yalumba classification system as an accurate reflection of our sentiments. Finally, after a slight refinement of the Yalumba model, we are proud to present what we believe is a true representation of Barossa Old Vine chronology and an apt reference point for all our winemakers and grape growers.

One of the important lessons we have learnt over the 167 years of grape growing and winemaking in the Barossa is that rules can (and will) change and evolve over time. But we are satisfied that the classification and terminology we have agreed on is a true and accurate representation of our treasury of Old Vines at this time.

We would like to note here that whilst vine age may often be used as an indicator of potential quality, it is not a prerequisite for quality, just as variety, region or maker does not, by itself, create a superior wine. What is generally accepted is that Old Vines go through the ripening process more effectively.

The Barossa's sense of guardianship for our Old Vineyards is a product of the region's close knit circle of winemakers and grape growers, many of whom have been working together for seven generations. We trust this Old Vine Charter will add further intrinsic value to these rare vineyards and, most importantly, help to highlight and protect these viticultural treasures from ever being pulled from the soils of the Barossa again.

Our next step is to establish an Old Vine Register for the Barossa.

**Barossa Grape & Wine Association**

