M. Chapoutier Domaine Cambrien

A partnership of Chapoutier and Jasper Hill, La Pleiade 2018 channels Heathcote's Cambrian earth into a Shiraz of brooding fruit, fine spice and mineral poise–power framed by precision for the cellar and the table.

La Pleiade Shiraz 2018

Victoria, Australia

Alcohol :15,00 %

Composition: 100% Syrah

Region and Vineyards

Heathcote sits in Central Victoria along the flanks of the **Mount Camel Range** (160-320 m). Warm summer days are tempered by altitude and southerly winds funneled along the slopes, delivering a high diurnal range that helps retain acidity—one of the signatures of Heathcote Shiraz. Rainfall is modest and fairly even; hillside sites largely avoid frost. Beneath the vines lies a vivid red, calcareous **Cambrian** soil derived from weathered greenstone. Noted for water-holding capacity, it enables widespread dry farming and contributes to wines that are deeply colored, ripe yet poised.

La Pleiade is sourced from these ancient red soils, sometimes called "**Cambrian earth** ." The combination of warm days, cool nights and iron-rich, decomposed igneous substrates builds concentration without sacrificing freshness, yielding Shiraz with plush dark fruit, sweet spice and a mineral thread. In short, Heathcote marries generosity to precision—exactly the profile this cuvée seeks to capture.

Winemaking

The 2018 is **100% Shiraz** (hand-harvested at full maturity by late March). Grapes are gently destemmed, then fermented for approximately six weeks in **open concrete tanks** with indigenous yeasts—an approach that maximizes aromatic complexity and fine-grained tannin while preserving terroir expression.

After a light pressing, the wine matures **12 months in new French oak** in the Heathcote cellar, with minimal intervention. The élevage adds polish and texture—subtle cedar, cocoa and baking spice—while keeping the fruit and mineral line at the fore. Expected longevity is up to **20 years**; decanting is advised in youth.

Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Deep magenta, densely hued with a youthful rim.
- **Aroma:** Black cherry, plum and blackberry layered with star anise, black pepper and clove; hints of violet and graphite over a ferrous, stony undertow.
- **Palate:** Full-bodied yet poised; a rich core of dark fruits framed by vibrant acidity and velvety, mouth-coating tannins. Sweet spice and discreet new oak lift segue to a long, mineral-inflected finish.

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Did you know?

La Pleiade is a collaborative wine born from **Michel & Corinne Chapoutier** and **Ron & Elva Laughton** (Jasper Hill). The label "Domaine Cambrien" nods directly to the region's ancient **Cambrian** soils that define Heathcote's identity.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Seven-hour roasted lamb:** Long, slow cooking builds sweetness and gelatinous texture that mirrors the wine's depth, while savory herbs resonate with its spice and mineral notes.
- **Beef Wellington:** The buttery pastry and mushroom duxelles meet the Shiraz's plush fruit and new-oak sheen; tannins cut the richness for balance.
- **Charred eggplant with miso glaze:** Smoky, umami-laden vegetable notes echo the wine's savory spice and bring out its floral lift.
- **Pepper-crusted venison loin:** Lean game suits the wine's firm structure; black pepper and juniper bridge to the Shiraz's peppery, dark-fruited profile.

Wine Spectator (WS) : 93 Points (2008)

A savory style, emphasizing tobacco, molasses and ironstone mineral flavors, which press against a core of blackberry fruit as the finish persists.This red has great structure and presence. Needs cellaring to bring it all out. Best from 2014 through 2020.

Robert Parker (RP) : 92 Points (2008)

The 2008 Cluster M45 (named after a star constellation, not London's worst traffic nightmare) has a deep garnet purple color and aromas of warm cassis, dark chocolate and licorice with spicy hints of cumin seed and cassis. Crisp acidity balances the rich, full-bodied, buxom fruit with medium-firm, fine tannins to lend support. The finish is long with a touch of earthy / truffle character coming through. Approachable now, this wine needs another year or so to soften and marry and should continue to give pleasure to 2020+.