

■ Overview

The Langhorne Creek region has a history of viticulture dating back to 1860 and is known for its flat, river delta landscape. It ideally suits the large scale, relatively low cost vineyard developments where a high degree of mechanisation is common.

■ The Big Picture

Australia's larger winemakers are well-represented in this region, for Langhorne Creek Shiraz or Cabernet Sauvignon is a valued contributor to many South Eastern Australian red blends by such winemakers as Beringer Blass, Hardy, Orlando and Southcorp. The extent of the area under vine tends to be on a larger scale, and several holdings are in excess of 300 hectares (740 acres) in size. Such multi-million dollar investments emphasise what many wine producers have known for decades; this is a remarkably good area for soft, fruity, medium bodied red wines.

However, there are an increasing number of smaller wineries now based in the region, which are changing preconceived perceptions by producing regional red wines that retain the element of softness while at the same time adding richness and a remarkable concentration of colour and flavour.

There are no subregions.
Langhorne Creek Wine Region

■ Climate

The growing season climate is predominantly shaped by the on-shore southerly winds blowing directly from the Southern Ocean across Lake Alexandrina. While intermittently broken by periods of the very hot weather associated with northerly winds emanating from central Australia, the prevailing southerlies normally reduce daytime temperature fluctuations. These southerlies also decrease sunshine hours and overall summer temperatures while increasing the relative humidity. The winter-spring rainfall pattern persists. Irrigation is universally practised and in part, by the unique method of diverting the Bremer River and deliberately flooding the land in late winter. Newer vineyards also use, in the main, conventional drip irrigation.

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■ Soil

Langhorne Creek's fertile soils are predominantly deep, alluvial sandy loams that vary in colour from red-brown to dark grey, with patches of black, self-mulching clays. All soil types promote vine vigour, generous canopies and cropping levels.

■ Wines

Cabernet Sauvignon and Blends: While less than a quarter of the wine currently made from grapes grown in Langhorne Creek is sold as a single-region wine, the style is relatively easy to define. Generally the wines are immediately accessible, soft and fragrant. Flavours are in the red berry spectrum, often with some gentle minty and chocolate overtones though seldom herbaceous or tannic. As in the Clare Valley, here Malbec adds a particular dimension when added to the blend, providing an almost riotously juicy wine with more cassis evident.

Shiraz and Blends: Often released as a single varietal but also blended with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot or Malbec, Shiraz produces strikingly fruity wines with flavours and aromas of cherry and mint. Its hallmark regional softness finishes with that hint of spice still remaining.

Verdelho: Although produced in relatively small quantities, a regional specialty, particularly as a fortified wine in the style of Madeira, Verdelho is increasingly handled as a soft, early maturing table wine.

■ Vital Statistics

Local Weather Station (Early Day Vineyards Bill Potts Langhorne Creek) 1990-2003	
Map Coordinates	35° 15'S, 138° 53'E
Altitude	sea-level to 50 m (164 feet), averaging 20 m (66 feet)
Heat degree days, Oct-Apr	1490 (cut off at 19° C (66. °2 F) but otherwise not adjusted)
Sunshine hours, Oct-Apr	1760
Annual rainfall	384 mm (15.1 inches)

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Regions
Langhorne Creek

Growing season rainfall	167 mm (6.5 inches)
Mean January temperature	19.7°C (67.5°F)
Relative humidity, Oct-Apr, 3 pm	Average 47% (Strathalbyn Gladstones)
Harvest	Early Feb - Late Apr

■ A Case In Point - Langhorne Creek - Great Climate

Phillip had the opportunity to purchase into a community owned private pipeline, it made it possible to change a dry land farm into Angas Plains Estate vineyard.

Understanding the shortage and demands of water the vineyard has been developed to grow with minimal irrigation. The sandy loam soil on our flood plains is ideal for growing the vines.

The afternoon breeze which blows in from in the afternoon keeps the temperatures a little lower over summer assisting the grapes.

The breezes also assist us with the reduction in incidence of fungal diseases, this is because we don't have high humidity captured in the vine canopy. We have an open canopy and with good air movement the leaves and bunches are able to dry out, minimising our requirements for chemical sprays that are used in vineyards to prevent these diseases.

Langhorne Creek is recognised as a very good consistent growing area for grapes which have soft approachable tannis, and great colour.

Angas Plains Estate is planted to 25.5 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon, 32 acres of and 2 acres of Chardonnay. We have some vacant land on the old flood plain on the edge of the Angas River which may get planted up in the near future with a new variety.

We have increased our on farm water holding capacity to ensure we have a supply of water to produce our next quality crop.



Vintage time

■ Summary

The Langhorne Creek region has been established as a wine growing region since 1860 and in recent times has become well represented by Australia's larger winemakers. The majority of the rainfall is during winter and spring seasons with established wineries using an irrigation system to divert the Bremer River and deliberately flooding the land in late winter. The newer vineyards also use the conventional drip irrigation. The main wine styles produced here include Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz, however they are also commonly produced as blends of both these wines.

■ Acknowledgements

South Australian Wine Industry Association