SINISTER HAND

With so many hot vintages in the past two decades 2022 was a bit of a throwback year – with plenty of snowpack in winter the cool spring temperatures delayed budbreak and provided plenty of growth on the vines. The cooler temperatures were followed by an intensely hot and short summer and ended with an extremely long glorious Indian summer.

Sinister Hand is a Chateauneuf-du-Pape (CDP) styled red blend. This region in the Rhone Valley receives heat, wind, and very rocky cobblestone soils – not unlike our hillside here at Union Gap Estate. The dominant grape of a CDP blend is Grenache – it loves heat and delivers pretty fruit aromas, plenty of richness in the form of alcohol and texture, and relatively low tannins – making for a highly approachable style of wine. It is balanced with Syrah for color and tannin, Mourvedre for structure and acidity, and a little Cinsaut because of its perfume and litheness.

I love the story behind the region – its in France so take this with a grain of salt – after sightings of UFO's in the area the mayor of Chateauneuf enacted a law outlawing the landing of extraterrestrial space ships (flying cigars or *Cigare Volante*) in their vineyards. So not to be outdone by our Gallic friends – we have our own Irish Story of how the O'Reilly ancestors came across their beautiful lands and eventual castle in County Cavan in Ireland – it involves a sword and a lot of blood.