



2013 Chardonnay

Tasting Notes

The wine is a fullish straw yellow in colour. The aromatics show a lovely balance between citrus laced fruits and subtle toasty oak, think lemon oil and freshly toasted baguette. Classic flinty notes are lifted by yeast lees derived complexity. In the mouth the wine shows beguiling balance between lemony freshness, biscuity yeast characters and deeper stone fruit flavours. Structurally the wine has been built to last with a firm acid core giving the wine definition and length. It is a classically proportioned cool climate Chardonnay with emphasis on fine texture and restrained fruit allowing these grand old vines to fully express their own subtle power.

Wine Analysis: Alcohol: 14 % Acidity 6.2 g/L pH 3.35 Residual sugar 1.8 g/L Extract 24 g/L

Vineyard & Winemaking

There are two blocks of Chardonnay in this vineyard. The old block on a free draining gravel terrace planted in the late '80's which contains several selections of the favoured small berry Mendoza clone, the infamous UCD range responsible for some of the most ordinary Chardonnay in the country and several selections made by Dr Richard Smart when he was NZ's national viticulturist at Ruakura. The lower lying "Hell" block is planted on terrace adjacent to the Waipara River so these vines have the advantage of sipping gently from the water table during most of the growing season. Hell block has some more recent selections including the famous Dijon clones selected by Dr Bernard at Dijon University. Combine these old vines with 25 years experience of our vineyard team and you have the recipe for some pretty impressive fruit. These old vines were in their day some of the best of the best. Small berried intense clones that yielded small bunches of intensely flavoured fruit that soaked up the intense Waipara summer heat. Alas in vines, as in humans, time takes its toll and by winter of 2012 some of these gnarly old vines were really suffering. So we cut back the bud numbers at pruning deliberately restricting the crop loads so that the vines could ripen what nature had allowed to set. The 2013 growing season was pretty close to ideal. Early spring heat brought out some pretty vigorous growth that required taming by the vineyard crew. After what seemed endless hours of shoot thinning, positioning and trimming the canopies were finally set with probably the best leaf area we have seen for some years. And ripen they did, possibly a little too well, but that is another story.

With the growing season fractionally warmer and drier than average the harvest came a little early in 2013 with an extended dry spell through February and March advancing maturity. The most promising blocks and clones had been identified early in the season so we had a pretty clear idea of where the best fruit was going to come from. Each batch of fruit was carefully hand picked and whole bunch pressed in our newly reconditioned tank press. As the fruit was clean and ripe we filled a range of new and seasoned French oak barrels direct from the press to get the solids levels in the juice up to encourage complexity in the ferments. Fermentation ran quite warm and we were encouraged by some funky "gout de fusil" aromatics. After ferment the wine was matured for 10 months on yeast lees after which selected barrels were put through malolactic fermentation. After another 2 months the wine was then racked, cleaned up and bottled in May 2014.

Harvest Date: 27 March - 18 April Brix 23.0 - 24.5 Acidity 7.5 - 9.2 g/L pH 3.25 - 3.43

Awards

International Wine & Spirit Competition 2014 - **Outstanding Silver**
 International Wine Challenge 2015 - **Bronze Medal**
 International Wine Challenge 2016 - **Silver Medal**
 Decanter World Wine Awards 2017 - **Silver Medal**