



## 2014 Chardonnay

### Tasting Notes

At bottling the 2014 Chardonnay has a brilliant green-gold colour with striking intensity. Aromatically it shows the subtle Chardonnay intensity. Biscuity, mealy notes intermingle with the aromas of fresh straw, very tight white and yellow fruits, a trace of toasty oak and gunflint. In the mouth the flavours build beautifully while remaining lithe and lively showing classic Waipara Chardonnay stone fruit characters balanced by nuanced fermentation derived complexity, very subtle oak and just a smudge of ripe skin phenolics in the finish.

**Wine Analysis:** Alcohol 13.2 % Acidity 6.3 g/L pH 3.37 Residual sugar <1 g/L

### Vineyard & Winemaking

2014 was a fairly challenging season. Budburst was slightly early compared to other years and as such presented itself with a few issues, particularly an unseasonal cold snap in October that knocked the vines back a week or two by mid spring. The vines recovered somewhat and flowering occurred ever so slightly late in November but in warm conditions so we enjoyed a reasonable if patchy fruit set. As summer progressed conditions warmed up and dried out, so much so that the irrigation system was brought into action quite early in the piece to ensure we had full canopy growth. We have some 11 different clones of Chardonnay here, the oldest Mendoza vines on the upper terrace really struggled to set fruit while the slightly more protected, younger vines in Hell Block gave us some wonderful, well set bunches of small but plentiful berries. In the run up to harvest we don't simply use sugar and acid as a measure of ripeness. We measure bunch and berry weights, assess the fruit and canopy health, seed lignification and most importantly monitor flavour development over time. We had learned from the previous season that Chardonnay flavours here can "blow out" quite quickly. So that once we saw the green cucumber character disappear during ripening to be replaced by slatey, flinty mineral characters we got straight to work harvesting rather than waiting as we had done so before. And did so with reasonably low sugars meaning the final alcohol in the wine is less than the previous year.

This wine is a lovely progression from the previous vintage. grapes were whole bunch pressed and sequentially filled directly to 20% new French Oak barrels coopered exclusively for Chardonnay. The primary ferments were warm, quick and taken to complete dryness. The barrels were then stirred intermittently during winter encouraging complexity with 30% of the older barrels going through malolactic fermentation. The wine has retained a structural seam of natural acidity which we hope will hold the wine together as it ages. There is also a small portion of skin fermentation adding further complexity and an intriguing saline quality to the wine.

**Harvest dates:** 1 - 9 April Brix 22.5 - 23.5 Acidity 8.2 - 9.5 g/L pH 3.21 - 3.33