

2020 Curly Flat Chardonnay



From the vineyard...

Compared to the warmer growing seasons of 2018 & 2019, 2020 walked a cooler path. Budburst commenced mid-September to the frosty welcome that can be part and parcel of our cool, continental climate. After a slightly warmer than usual October, November saw the return of much cooler weather for flowering and fruit set. These cooler conditions led to smaller than usual bunches being formed across the vineyard. Fruit set completed in a warmer than average December, that in hindsight stands as one of our warmest and driest on record. This warmth served as the last hurrah of substantial heat, with the remainder of the season receiving heat best described as gentle warmth. As temperatures decreased, rainfall began to increase with most months receiving above average moisture. With our usual great attention to detail in the vineyard, plus some great end game weather, a compact yet highly qualitative harvest was completed by the end of the first week of April.

From the winery...

Picked in the cool of the morning, Chardonnay from three distinct blocks were whole bunch pressed to tank with cloudy juice transferred to barrel the following day.

Indigenous yeasts dictated ferment in various formats ranging from 228, 300 and 500 litre barrels. From there barrels were stirred monthly until minimal sulphur was added in late Spring. Varying amounts of MLF were employed, totalling in 65% in the final blend along with 27% new oak. After maturing for 12 months our 2020 Chardonnay was then lightly filtered before being put to bottle.

Our tasting note:

Colour: Straw green gold.

Bouquet: White florals merge with fresh pear & white stone fruits as struck match & wheat notes form a complexing contrast. Layers of lemon-lime citrus zest, fennel and fresh cut green apple add charm to the subtly savoury frame of white truffle and baker's spice.

Palate: Intense white peach drives the front palate before being drawn taut via crisp citrus energy that merges with savoury wheatmeal notes and fine chalky structure that culminates with lingering minerality.

Cellaring: Drinking beautifully now with easily 8+ years cellaring potential.

Reviews

"We're not quite there but the chardonnay vines at Curly Flat are nearly 30 years old now. Which is pretty significant. 2020 was a super-low yield year so this is in lower supply than usual. It will be released in March.

It's a wine of wonderful intensity. I drank a full two glasses, which is unusual for me and white wine, and I kept being struck by the force of flavour. It's long and elegant too, controlled, driven by stone fruit but laced with custard apple, cedarwood, pear and chalk. There's ample juice here but it has a lovely dryness through the finish; almost a textural dryness, hence the chalk reference. This is an excellent release, perfectly balanced, flavoursome and finessed."

95 points - Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front (24/2/22)