

MAISON NOIRE

Chardonnay Fraicheur 2021

Tasting notes

Winemaking:

The grapes come from a single vineyard in the Puketapu area by the Tutaekuri river on sandy soil. They were hand-picked on the 21st February 2021, which is the earliest pick I have done for a still wine in the 15 years I have been in Hawkes Bay! The soil type imparts a lot of fresh characters to the wine ("Fraicheur" in French), and this pick was the first since the block was replanted in 2018, which is always special!

The grapes were carried in small bins to the winery and whole bunch pressed into a stainless steel tank (free run juice) and seasoned barrels (pressings). The tank was racked off its heavy lees, then all vessels were inoculated with various strains of yeasts and fermented dry.

The wine was aged for a further couple of months on full lees, then blended, lightly fined and filtered before bottling in late June 2021.

Result:

A very fruit driven, yet vibrant and varietal wine that brings a nice freshness in the front palate with aromas of lemon, grapefruit, followed by pineapple, almonds and subtle floral notes. It has a nice backbone in the mid-palate, with notes of minerality and dried herbs. A great wine to share with friends as an aperitif or to match with tapas, fish & chips or fried chicken dishes. Optimum drinking time is 2021 - 2025. 140 cases produced.

Analysis at bottling:

pH=3.34

TA=6.87 g/l

Alc=13.25% Vol.

RS=0.91 g/l

Vintage conditions

2020/2021: One of the driest season on records... that followed another hot year the previous vintage. Some nasty frosts caused some damages in the earliest bud bursting areas, as the season started 2-3 weeks ahead of normal due to a rather mild winter.

Early crop protection was paramount to keep the fungal pressure down, and localised bursts of rain were welcome in spring to keep the soil moisture to a decent level. Flowering was quite poor due to a wet patch at a crucial time, and summer hit early with some record breaking temperature in late November and December. Powdery mildew was again an issue in some areas, but the sun and droughty conditions got the ripening of the grapes to very high level of sweetness and very clean flavours. Harvest for still wines was the earliest over the last 2 decades, with late ripening varieties offering outstanding quality.