

MAISON NOIRE

Chardonnay Paki-Paki 2020

Tasting notes

Winemaking:

The grapes were hand-picked from an organically run vineyard in pristine condition in early March. This vineyard, located on a North facing limestone hillside, constantly gives outstanding quality grapes for both their flavour and intensity.

The grapes were full bunch pressed straight into French Oak barrels and fermented with selected yeast until dry, then went through a full malolactic fermentation. A portion of new oak gave beautiful complexity and the wine was bottled in December 2020 after minimal fining and filtration to retain the full flavours and freshness.

Result:

Fresh yet elegant this Chablis Cru style barrel fermented Chardonnay is rich and complex. Aromas of grapefruit, pineapple, mandarin rind and mango with a hint of flint. Generous oaky flavours with a broad and ample mid palate; flavours of hazelnuts, vanilla, with a whisper of bay leaf, finishing with silky butter characters.

A great acidity carries all the flavours and complex notes together, calling for a match with a fish in sauce, a poultry dish or Mexican spiced inspired cuisine.

Optimum drinking time is 2021-2025.

Analysis at bottling:

pH=3.33

TA=5.34 g/l

Alc=13.87% Vol.

RS=2.49 g/l

Vintage conditions

2019/2020: This season followed some normal regional patterns until it reached a droughty summer. Good amount of rainfall from winter to mid-spring, with enough frosts to reduce pests pressure but not overly affecting the bud burst period. Overall a good layout of fruit that was allowed by dryer conditions around flowering, but still some pressure of powdery mildew that had to be dealt with careful spraying program.

From November to April though, the weather tap seemed to totally dry out, with very little rainfall and lower disease pressure around picking time. The droughty conditions let early varieties to be fully ripe early in the season in some parts of the Hawkes Bay, while they slowed the maturation of later varieties suffering from lack of water (in non-irrigated vineyards such as the Maison Noire Home Block). However, the overall quality of the grapes was great with very deep flavours and clean fruit apart from bird peck damage that could be sorted out during manual picking.

In March the country went to lockdown due to the COVID-19 epidemic, which made the hand picking and logistics very challenging. A vintage that we will remember for years to come!

Reviews (extract)

- **Yvonne Lorkin (4 stars):** "Just 75 cases were produced of this uber-refreshing chardonnay which is grown in the deep, limestone-laden soils of Hawke's Bay's Paki Paki sub-region, just south of Hastings. With its lifted almond, peach and lemon aromatics and creamy, softly oaky mid-palate and saturation of citrus on the finish, it's a highly refined, elegant style with a marathon-like finish. Superb."
- **Michael Cooper (4½ stars):** "The subtle, youthful 2020 vintage is a rare wine – only 75 cases were produced. A single-vineyard wine, hand-picked and barrel-fermented, it is full-bodied and very harmonious, with ripe, citrusy, peachy flavours, mealy, biscuity notes adding complexity, balanced acidity and a finely textured finish. A distinctive wine with obvious potential, it's well worth cellaring to 2023+."