

MAISON NOIRE

Chenin Blanc Home Block 2020

Tasting notes

Winemaking:

The Chenin Blanc grapes, grown on our single Home Block vineyard, were hand harvested in great condition in early April 2020.

The grapes were pressed and the juice transferred into French oak barrels and a stainless steel vessel with light fining at low temperature. This juice was then racked and fermented in French oak barrels. 2 different batches were created from this process, with a blend of selected and wild yeast. One batch had more new oak and went through a full malolactic fermentation after the ferment got dry, while the other batch was stopped with a balanced amount of residual sugar. Both batches were blended prior to fining and bottling in December 2020.

Result:

This is a fresh, round and complex wine, elegantly refined with a greeting of flinty smokiness and minerality followed by aromas of lemon, nectarine and baked apples with notes of jasmine, mint and almonds. Crunchy apple brings freshness while honey and nougat bring richness to the palate, with a soft buttery finish.

Well rounded, full bodied with good length, it is a perfect food match for a cheese platter, Asian dish, fish in sauce, spicy poultry, pork belly or enjoy on its own.

Will cellar well until 2025-30, slowly developing tertiary aromas of straw and sherry.

Analysis at bottling:

pH=3.29

TA=5.81 g/l

Alc=13.12% Vol.

RS=5.72 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 (5 stars):** "this Chenin Blanc has clean, creamy, almond and apple aromatics and a super-nice nougat and citrus custard character in the mid palate which I really really love. But the best thing about this wine is how luscious and textural it is. Delicately fine astringency, quartz mineral characters and a generously structured finish. Only 135 cases were produced, so buy now or forever kick yourself. I absolutely adore this wine!"
- **Michael Cooper (4½ stars):** "The 2020 vintage is a very youthful, vigorous, single-vineyard wine, hand-harvested at Waimarama. Bright, light lemon/green, it is full-bodied, fresh and lively, with ripe melon-like flavours, showing good complexity, a vague hint of sweetness, balanced acidity and a finely poised, persistent finish."