

CHARTERIS

CENTRAL OTAGO - NEW ZEALAND

2014 Charteris The Astral Vineyard Chardonnay

Winemakers Notes

The Elemental Forces of Nature have always had an impact on grape growing and winemaking. In the modern era we have tried to negate these influences in the search for uniformity. More recently however some vignerons have embraced the idea of harnessing this energy in the search for purity. So in 2014 I had the opportunity to use a Waxing Moon and gravity instead of mechanical means to see the Astral Chardonnay juice from whole bunches in the press to juice in the barrel ready for the naturally occurring yeast to work their magic. Almost 2 years later and with a wine that challenged the bedrock of my Oenological thinking I bottled a wine that perhaps says man it part of Nature, not above it.

Tasting Note

This is a wine of paradox, tight but abundant, fruit focused yet loaded with complexity. It tastes a little different every time I open a bottle. Opens with gentle lime, flint, Brioche, subtle hazelnut and vanilla custard aromas. Subtle grapefruit and mandarin blossom with flint and quartz mineral adds deminsion. There are also hints of sherbert and bread yeast, airy cordite and a fume of far off manuka smoke from a BBQ fire by the lake on a warm afternoon. The slightest note of mango fruit, from the Mendoza clone I suspect. Its evocative stuff, smells of wet river rocks when you sit down to tie on a new fly by the edge of the Clutha River. Not sure if that is the smell of the water or the minerals it carries that have been laid down over the millenia in the soil that supports these vines. The palate entry is light and airy then an abundance of volume with bright acidity. The wine never finished malo and initially I struggled to reconcile the power of the acid. As a result we have held onto it in the cellar for a bit longer before release and now I'm happy with where it sits. The acidity has bedded into the structure of the wine and the result is density with mineral line and length. The lime, vanilla and brioche carry over from the nose to the palate with some green mango and Lime juice, think Thai Green Mango Salad. There is a salty edge with mineral crunch on the finish. I think I'm hungry.

Vintage Conditions

A relatively warm 2013 winter with good rain in June/July ensured moderately comfortable pruning conditions. The frosts of mid winter were not as severe and the cloud inversion that can sit over the vineyards of Bannockburn had generally lifted by midday instead of the usual 3pm. I even found myself in a tee shirt for a few hours in the early afternoon. The mild winter and good soil moisture set up an early budburst and a great start to the growing season with the only hiccup being a few nervous nights where the mercury dropped below zero in late October. Calm and dry conditions prevailed through November and December with a timely 30mm of rain in early January relieving any stress in the vineyard. From that time on apart from a cold 24 hours around the 18th of January and a heat spike in early February things remained dry and mild. Sugars accumulated slowly with good acid retention and plenty of flavour in the fruit. After the richness and riper punch of 2013, 2014 has delivered finer structure and finesse with natural balance. I think this vintage will show very good longevity, only time in the cellar will tell.

Technical Information

- Hand picked 7th April 2014
- UCD Clone 6 at 21.9 Brix and Mendoza on at 23.2 Brix
- Organically farmed - Clonal composition - 75% Mendoza, 25% UCD6
- Whole Bunch pressed with some footstomping first using gravity to tank under a Waxing Gibbous Moon -
- Settled post press for 24 hours before racking to one new 500 Litre Puncheon, one used 500 Litre Puncheon and 3 old Barriques by gravity
- Wild ferment - Kept on lees until February 2016 with no Sulphur Dioxide
- Malolactic fermentation did not completely finish because I got too nervous and decided to bottle at about 1.0g/L Malic Acid from a start of about 5.5g/L
- SO2 added just before bottling on 10th February 2016
- Post Bottling analysis
- 13.5% Alcohol, 3.24 pH, 8.1 g/L Titratable Acidity - 315 6 packs bottled



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