

THE HERMIT CRAB



Viognier Marsanne 2023

McLaren Vale, Viognier (55%) Marsanne (45%)

The Name

Many of McLaren Vale's vineyards are on free-draining soils underlain with limestone, formed by the calcareous remains of the local marine fauna. One such creature was the Hermit Crab, a reclusive little crustacean that inhabits the cast-off shells of others. The Osborn family thought the name appropriate for this, McLaren Vale's first ever blend of Viognier and Marsanne. "Hermit" is also an abbreviation for the French appellation where the Marsanne grape variety dominates.

The Vintage

The cool, wet 2022 winter filled the subsoil, while spring's heavy rainfall impacted yields. Shaded basal buds and reduced fruitfulness from the previous season resulted in small yields. Mild, dry summer caused late veraison. Despite a week of intense heat in February, most vines survived. Riesling started three weeks late, and McLaren Vale Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc ripened with low yields due to the heat wave. Autumn was mild, and red grape harvest followed McLaren Vale Chardonnay, with variable, mostly low yields. Fiano, Marsanne, Roussanne, and Viognier ripened alongside the reds. Only 100 tonnes of red varieties remained by Easter, with low yields in Adelaide Hills Chardonnay and Pinot. Dry white Chardonnay vineyards were used for sparkling wine, promising a great year.

The Winemaking

Small batches of grapes are crushed gently and transferred to stainless steel basket presses. Fermentation is long and moderately cool to retain fresh fruit characters. About 4% underwent wild fermentation for extra complexity. 14% of the Viognier is fermented in aged French Oak to add mouth feel and support the subtle Viognier tannins. The Marsanne component received similar treatment, but was not blended until the final stages of the winemaking process.

The Characteristics

One of the most surprising white blends shines again. Vibrant translucent green to gold colour. Extremely fragrant on the nose with a floral mix of jasmine and tropical fruits where pineapple and nashi pears are complemented with a scent of chamomile. On the palate there is an array of intense stone fruits with apricots, nectarines and white peach. The finish is fresh and well balanced, complemented by a unique and exotic spicy candied ginger that makes this wine irresistible. Lovely by itself but also a perfect companion to seafood and Asian cuisine in general. Absolutely a high quality wine for its price range.



Harvest dates	21 Mar - 3 Apr	Alcohol	14.0%
Residual sugar	5.2 g/l	Titrateable acid	5.3
pH	3.39	Oak maturation	8 months
Chief Winemaker	Chester Osborn	Senior Winemaker	Jack Walton