



— White Lady Chardonnay 2017 —

History

Over the years the wine has grown into its power and has garnered critical acclaim. The Warwick White Lady Chardonnay 2014 was crowned White Wine of the Year by the John Platter's Guide 2016 as well as being awarded a five-star rating. This wine incorporates Warwick's block 18 which is 25 years old. There is one block from the Helderberg planted on the block known as "Koffie Klip" and one cooler, higher-lying block on sandy loam. The Chardonnay plantings are limited to the coolest slopes on the Warwick Estate. This wine incorporates Warwick's Block 18 which is NW facing. There are two vineyards from the Helderberg, both west facing; with one planted on a block comprised of "Koffie Klip" soils and the other on a cooler, higher-lying block on sandy loam.

Season

Winter arrived late in most regions, but it was cold enough to stimulate dormancy in time. The rainfall from June to August was lower than the previous year and the day and night temperatures were warmer. This was a season where irrigation had to be managed meticulously. A warm spring led to some of the early cultivars experiencing bud burst earlier, especially the Chardonnay, the warm temperatures cooled down again during September, which slowed down shoot growth. October to November were warm with regular but light rain showers, but fortunately this was after flowering and berry set. December was drier and slightly cooler than usual during the day. Constant wind and low rainfall caused the soil to dry out very quickly towards the end of December. This resulted in berries that were much smaller. The temperatures cooled down at a later stage, especially at night, which caused the sugar levels of the vineyard blocks to slowly increase.

Winemaking

The grapes were handpicked at sunrise to ensure the fruit was cold at the time of harvesting in order to preserve grape quality. Grapes were then transported to the cellar for whole-bunch pressing. Whole-bunch pressing limits phenolics as well as extracts only the best quality juice. The press was set to a delicate champagne cycle and the juice was pressed into a stainless steel tank. The juice is then cold settled for one day at 10 degrees and then racked to barrel with some fine lees. The barrels are left to wild ferment (where no yeast is added) and this fermentation lasted for six months. A portion of the barrels (about 25%) went through malolactic fermentation.

Towards the end of fermentation the barrels are regularly stirred up to build body in the wine. Fermentation was also helped along by rolling the barrels into the sunshine to heat up. Once the wine has fermented to dry the barrels are rolled once a week to stir up the lees. After 11 months in barrels the wine is racked, fined and given a light filtration before bottling.

Barrel selection

The wine is matured in 100% French oak. The barrels used were 228L Burgundian coopers sourced mainly from Demptos with some Cadus and Damy. Third new oak, third second fill and third, third fill for a period of ten months. The barrel toasting was medium and blonde, which adds a mineral richness to the wine without overpowering the fruit.

Tasting profile

On the nose there is a multilayered bouquet of ripe yellow lemons, blood orange, vanilla pod and intense wet stone minerality. Citrus fruit flavors follow through on the palate, bright refreshing acidity on entry yellow lemon flavors prominent. The wine broadens on the mid palate with flavors blood orange and ripe nartjie coming through. Medium bodied with a creamy texture and a long finish with notes of vanilla pod and mace.

Ageing potential

The trend seems to be to drink Chardonnay younger these days as wine lovers seem to enjoy the primary fruit aromas of freshly cut pear, mandarin and mineral notes more than the more secondary, developed, aged ones of vanilla beans, honey, anise and honeysuckle blossom. Drink it in the way that you best enjoy it. This Chardonnay will benefit from 2-3 years of bottle ageing and will continue to develop for up to 10 years, if you are disciplined to wait that long.

Food match

Barbequed line-caught fish basted in lemon butter charged with garden-green herbs such as parsley and tarragon; Lemony, creamy prawn and pea risotto; Smokey, sticky pork belly served with milk-baked potatoes; Roasted fennel bulb and goats' cheese salad.

Alc 13% RS 1.9 PH 3.31 TA 6.1g/l