

THE HERMIT CRAB

Viognier Marsanne 2022

McLaren Vale, Viognier (66%) Marsanne (34%)



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

It has been a good winter, the early Spring rains set the vines up very well. November was about 3 degrees colder than average and so the set was variable, especially Mauvedre which suffered the worst. Luckily, many varieties still had quite a large potential crop, so yields ended about 15% down from 2021 (which was a big crop year). December was bone dry, but January saw 33mm compared to 20mm average. This too set the vines up very well. There was almost no rain and very mild conditions in February, March and April, free of hot or cold spells which resulted in very good leaf retention and ripening. All varieties resulted in outstanding wines. At this stage, it is early to call the vintage but I believe the reds from this vintage are the best I have seen in years. They show great colour fruit, fruit fragrance, richness, acidity, tannins and style. The Red skins were very thick and crunchy and no shrivel was seen, resulting in high tannin content, causing us to pull juice off the skins sweeter than usual, to achieve the desired results.

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

Shining pale golden colour. Fragrant aromas of tropical fruits like pineapple, melon, white peach and citrus blossom. The palate is far beyond the norm. Clean and fresh flavours of honeydew melon, pear, stone fruits, lemon curd and a characteristic pickled ginger in the end. Long and refreshing with bursting flavours through the finish. Perfect wine to pair with Asian food.



Harvest dates	1 Mar - 5 Apr	Alcohol	14.0%
Residual sugar	2.7 g/l	Titrateable acid	5.8
pH	3.36	Oak maturation	8 months
Chief Winemaker	Chester Osborn	Senior Winemaker	Jack Walton