



## Newton Johnson 2019 Family Vineyards Chardonnay

Chardonnay is compelling when it has energy, giving you an impressionists' experience of natural light. It is an elusive quality that great wines share despite the versatility of the variety. It is more of a winemakers' wine where observation pays off, and though it easy to make, in contrast it is surprisingly easy to muddy the message from the vineyard.

The Family Vineyards Chardonnay is comprised of three vineyard sites from the farm, widely varied in their exposure to the sun. The vibrancy, clear cut structure and long flavour we perceive from these granitic slopes is our safeguarded jewel. This well-drained, gravelly soil of mostly quartz, pink feldspar and mica on the lower part of the slope reaches down to deposits of clay. Clay adsorbs water and high concentrations of trace elements for the increasingly complex activity of soil microorganisms, which all contributes to the building blocks of the wine's crystalline flavour profile. Our south facing Chardonnay vineyards produce edgy and agile wines with nervy acidity, while the north facing slopes are more lustrous wines, delivering weight without being heavy, layering the structure. A natural approach in the winemaking will ensure a complex array of characters in this wine.

### **ANALYSIS**

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| Alcohol by volume | 13.4 %   |
| Total Acidity     | 6.55 g/l |
| pH                | 3.29     |
| Residual sugar    | 1.7 g/l  |

### **LOCATION & CLIMATE**

These vineyards lie on the mid slopes at altitudes of 240-260m, in the porphyritic Granite soils of the Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley. This appellation ranges from 4 to 8 km in proximity to the Atlantic Ocean. The climate is cool and temperate, where parallel mountain ranges channel the southerly oceangoing winds through the appellation during the summer. These southerly winds in turn create regular sea mists and overcast conditions, moderating the temperatures in the valley. The annual rainfall is 850mm, with 50% falling in the winter months (May - August).

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>APELLATION</b>    | Wine of Origin UPPER HEMEL-EN-AARDE VALLEY                   |
| <b>SOIL</b>          | Carbon rich decomposed granite over red clay subsoil         |
| <b>ASPECT</b>        | North (30%), South (45%) South East (25%). Slopes of 11-13%. |
| <b>TRELISSING</b>    | 7-wire Vertical Shoot Positioning (VSP) with movable wires   |
| <b>AGE OF VINES</b>  | 12 - 17 years  |
| <b>PRUNING</b>       | Cordon   |
| <b>VINES PER Ha</b>  | 2645 (steep slope with partial terraces) - 4166              |
| <b>AVERAGE YIELD</b> | 1.9 - 5 tons/Ha (12 - 32 hl/Ha)                              |

## 2019 VINTAGE

### *Growing Season & Harvesting*

A most challenging vintage season, bordering on multiple personality disorder. The grape yields were on average 30% down, with Chardonnay affected the most at 70% down on yield, mostly due to the interrupted winter and winds during flowering. A period of warm temperatures during mid-July interrupted the winter dormancy and led to uneven budding of the vines later in early September with a very light crop. The spring was the coolest of the last 5 drought years and relatively dry. Gale force winds during the flowering time in November led to a further decrease in crop. Bunches had less berries on them, and they were smaller due to the cool weather and slow vegetative growth. The ripening summer period was the coolest of the last 10 years, leading to harvest dates that were comparable to what we were used to before the drought and elevated natural acidity in the fruit. Intermittent rain during the harvest made it difficult to protect the harvest from rot and our sorting table was as busy as ever.

The **Chardonnay** was harvested between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of **February**.

### WEATHER DATA RESPECTIVE TO VINTAGE SEASONS

|   | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>DORMANCY / WINTER (June - August)</b>        |      |      |      |      |      |
| Rain (mm)                                       | 437  | 389  | 347  | 338  | 325  |
| Average Temperature (°C)                        | 13,2 | 12,9 | 14,2 | 13,7 | 14,5 |
| Accumulated Chilling Portions (Dynamic Model)   | 35   | 33   | 26   | 32   | 22   |
| <b>VEGETATIVE GROWTH (September - December)</b> |      |      |      |      |      |
| Rain (mm)                                       | 198  | 233  | 180  | 162  | 160  |
| Average Temperature (°C)                        | 17,4 | 17,9 | 17,6 | 17,5 | 17,1 |
| Growing Degree Days units (°C)                  | 987  | 1031 | 1019 | 1002 | 915  |
| <b>RIPENING (January - February)</b>            |      |      |      |      |      |
| Rain (mm)                                       | 73   | 56   | 119  | 91   | 150  |
| Average Temperature (°C)                        | 20,9 | 22,1 | 21   | 21,4 | 19,4 |
| Total hours over 30°C                           | 55   | 95   | 74   | 95   | 22   |
| Growing Degree Days (°C)                        | 682  | 780  | 708  | 732  | 617  |

### ***Winemaking***

The grapes are handpicked and packed in to small, shallow crates to limit crushing of the bunches. The day's harvest is cooled down overnight to 8°C in the winery's refrigerated cold room. The grape bunches are hand-sorted on a conveyor table and fall directly to the press for whole bunch pressing. The best quality juice (approximately 40% of the press yield) is drained directly to barrel, with the balance settled by temperature only (no enzyme used) and racked the next day to barrel for spontaneous fermentation. No sulphur is used in the winemaking, allowing diverse micro-organisms from the grape itself to flourish unrestrained in the fermentation.

### ***Maturation & Bottling***

Matured for 11 months in barrique (228L) and puncheon (500L) barrels produced in Burgundy and custom made for these vineyards. The format size of barrel varies from vineyard to vineyard, depending on vine age and the power of expression of each site. Tighter grained oak is preferred for subtle flavour, with longer seasoning and slower, lower temperature toasting. **New oak** comprises **35%**. The wine is racked to stainless steel for another 5 months of élevage. No fining, coarse filtration and sulphur adjustment before bottling.

|                              |                |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>BOTTLES<br/>PRODUCED</b>  | 5 400 x 750ml  |
| <b>BOTTLING<br/>DATE</b>     | 16 July 2020   |
| <b>CELLAR DOOR<br/>PRICE</b> | R 360.00       |
| <b>BEST DRINKING</b>         | Now - 10 years |