



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 is 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.

TASTING NOTES

Lucid ripe citrus and white peach are inured with ornate spices and lime zest. The fleshiness of the wine is counter balanced with mineral tones and gunflint. The brittle crunch in the structure hems in the lush texture, with an elongated thread of acidity resonating in the finish.

ANALYSIS	Alcohol by volume	13.1 %
	Total Acidity	6.6 g/l
	pH	3.45
	Residual sugar	2.4 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).

APPELLATION Wine of Origin UPPER HEMEL-EN-AARDE VALLEY

SOIL Carbon rich decomposed granite over red clay subsoil

ASPECT	North (30%), South (45%) South East (25%). Slopes of 11-13%.
TRELISSING	7-wire Vertical Shoot Positioning (VSP) with movable wires
AGE OF VINES	16 - 21 years
PRUNING	Double Guyot & Cordon
VINES PER Ha	2645 (steep slope with partial terraces) - 4166
AVERAGE YIELD	4 tons/Ha (27 hl/Ha)

2023 VINTAGE

Growing Season & Harvesting

The growing season was preceded by a fairly marginal Winter for vine dormancy. June saw some good rainfall throughout, followed by drier and mild periods in July that presumably caused some uneven budding in the Chardonnay. A colder August retained the dormancy in the vineyards to a timely budbreak in the 2nd week of September. A drier, windy and quite cool Spring resulted in slow growth in the vine canopy until December when some heat and good rains brought a late flush of vegetal growth. A dry and warm January hastened veraison with conditions looking idyllic, until the first rains arrived in early February as the first grapes arrived. Intermittent rain continued throughout February and March with rain every other day, making it exceedingly difficult to pick grapes and botrytis rot remained a constant threat. Had it not been for the favourable weather in January to bring the grapes and tannins to ripeness, the vintage could have been much worse.

These three **Chardonnay** vineyards were harvested from **9th to 29th February**.

WEATHER DATA RESPECTIVE TO VINTAGE SEASONS

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
DORMANCY / WINTER (June - August)					
Rain (mm)	325	202	348	277	235
Average Temperature (°C)	14,5	13,6	13,5	13,2	13,7
Accumulated Chilling Portions (Dynamic Model)	22	28	33	45	35
VEGETATIVE GROWTH (September - December)					
Rain (mm)	160	233	200	197	152
Average Temperature (°C)	17,1	16,8	15,9	15,7	16,6
Growing Degree Days units (°C)	915	884	790	765	874
RIPENING (January - February)					
Rain (mm)	150	99	46	20	92
Average Temperature (°C)	19,4	20	19,8	20,6	19,9
Total hours over 30°C	22	26	12	57	27
Growing Degree Days (°C)	617	637	614	663	616

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 until

preparations for bottling, 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 **28%**. The wine is raked to stainless steel for another 5 months of élevage. No fining, coarse filtration and sulphur adjustment before bottling.

BOTTLES PRODUCED	13 200 x 750ml
BOTTLING DATE	10 May 2024
CELLAR DOOR PRICE	R 520.00
BEST DRINKING	Now – 10 years