

THE HERMIT CRAB

Viognier Marsanne 2017

McLaren Vale, Viognier (84%) Marsanne (16%)



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 of Hermitage, where the Marsanne grape variety dominates.

The Characteristics

An attractive pale gold colour with a lime green hue. There's white peach, pear and green melon on the nose. The palate is textural and spicy, with flavours of honeydew melon, just ripe stone fruit and pickled ginger. It finishes slightly phenolic, adding some pleasing, mouth-watering grip to the back palate. Serve cold, with food.

The Vintage

A healthy winter and plenty of spring rains set the vines up very well. Bud burst was on time, but very cool for the first part of spring. Shoots grew to 5 or 6 inches long and then stopped for a month. Flowering was quite late, by three weeks, which meant a late start to harvest, and long, slow ripening periods. The summer rains stopped in mid-January, so disease pressure was low. It was very dry from February to April, with only a few millimetres of rain. Days were mild with a lot of cool nights, the first few weeks of April was around two degrees hotter than usual, which help that last bits of fruit to ripen. Overall, a great vintage with minimal disease pressure and above average crop levels.

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 and American Oak to add mouth feel and support the subtle Viognier tannins. The Viognier and Marsanne components received similar treatment, but are not blended until the final stages of the winemaking process.



Harvest dates	2 Mar -27 Apr	Alcohol	13.5%
Residual sugar	4.0 g/L	Titrateable acid	6.3
pH	3.39	Oak maturation	8 months
Chief Winemaker	Chester Osborn	Senior Winemaker	Jack Walton