

THE HERMIT CRAB

Viognier Marsanne 2021

McLaren Vale, Viognier (61%) Marsanne (39%)



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

The preceding winter was beautifully wet, flushing the soil of salts and filling the soil profile. Spring too was above average, with rainfalls up until November which was almost completely dry. November was hotter than normal which upset the setting of berries. Just as well as the bunch number was way up. Two inches of rain in early February was much appreciated by the relatively large crops. Where crops were smaller, berry size grew. The heat produced a fast flowering, set, and speedy berry development leading to an early veraison and the equal earliest start of vintage on record. A few days in a row around 35°C in February rapidly ripened early lower cropping vineyards. From then on, the vintage was mild and dry. Average temperatures for autumn were down. Some nice 30°C days late March and early April helped finish ripening of bigger crops and late ripening varieties.

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

Very aromatic! This vintage is more delicate and floral than we are used to with The Hermit Crab. But at the same time, it is very tropical. Pineapple leaps straight away leaps from the glass. It's a medium bodied white wine, with green papaya, melon, white nectarine, stone fruits, followed by a little hint of ginger on the finish. A little bit of dryness, yet still fresh. Slightly warm from the higher alcohol content.



Harvest dates	18 Feb - 20 Apr	Alcohol	14.0%
Residual sugar	4.2 g/l	Titrateable acid	5.7
pH	3.34	Oak maturation	8 months
Chief Winemaker	Chester Osborn	Senior Winemaker	Jack Walton