



<i>Harvest dates</i>	<i>21 Feb - 3 April</i>
<i>Alcohol</i>	<i>13.8%</i>
<i>Residual sugar</i>	<i>4.3 g/l</i>
<i>Titatable acid</i>	<i>5.9</i>
<i>pH</i>	<i>3.22</i>
<i>Oak maturation</i>	<i>8 months</i>
<i>Chief Winemaker</i>	<i>Chester Osborn</i>
<i>Senior Winemaker</i>	<i>Jack Walton</i>

The Hermit Crab Viognier Marsanne 2012

McLaren Vale, Viognier (55%) Marsanne (45%)

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 Vintage

A wet late summer followed by a wet winter in 2011 set the vines up perfectly for the 2012 vintage. Spring and summer were considerably dryer than normal, but a small amount of rain and considerably cooler weather in early February slightly enlarged the berries but reduced the stress of the vines keeping fruit character and acidity.

The whites are beautifully expressive with lovely flavours, balance, and length and with no coarseness or broadness. Reds are black, solid and quite structured, the biggest year for some time; not oily but definitely gutsy. All red varieties performed fantastically.

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 3% 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.

The Characteristics

The Viognier throws the first punch in this wonderfully aromatic wine with its heavenly lift of candied ginger and crunchy, yet sweet white nectarine. A deeper look unveils the more complex Marsanne notes of green papaya and pistachio.

An abundance of stone fruits hold sway over the sumptuous attack and mid palate. The finish is surprisingly savoury. The Marsanne's nuttiness is quite persistent and coupled with a delicate hint of sea spray.

The complete package of stone fruits and spice with a long savoury finish makes this wine the perfect dinner party starter.