

THE HERMIT CRAB

Viognier Marsanne 2014

McLaren Vale, Viognier (74%) Marsanne (26%)



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

The season began well with average winter rainfall, Summer conditions were significantly warmer than average with two heatwaves through January testing the limits of the vines. Following the heatwave was rain and cool weather, which helped slow down ripening, and allowed flavour development to catch up to sugar ripeness.

White wines from this vintage are fruity and very flavoursome, as are reds with ample tannin to match.

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 nose of this wine displays an enticing mix of white stonefruits and sweet pineapple with an underlying hint of ginger.

The palate is luscious and flavoursome, again nectarine and peach are prominent, with a twist of candied citrus rind.

These sweet flavours evolve through the palate into more savoury flavours reminiscent of raw almonds and spice. A generous, textural wine with a surprising finesse on the finish.



Harvest dates	12 Feb-7 Apr	Alcohol	13.2%
Residual sugar	3.2 g/l	Titrateable acid	5.7
pH	3.36	Oak maturation	8 months
Chief Winemaker	Chester Osborn	Senior Winemaker	Jack Walton