



2009 CHARDONNAY TÊTE DE CUVÉE

WINEMAKING DATA

Harvest Dates: 6th to 19th of October, 2009

Brix at harvest: 21.9

Blend and grape source: 100% organically grown estate Chardonnay from the Locust Lane and Rosomel Vineyards

Alcohol: 13.0% **pH:** 3.21

Residual Sugar: 0.03g/L **T.A.** 8.38 g/L

Bottling Date: March 23rd, 2011

Oak regime: 100% French Oak: 20% New, 40% 2nd fill and older for the 1st 9 months; 20% stainless steel barrels, 35% 2nd fill and older for a further 4 months; Stainless steel for 4 months

Time in barrel: 13 months

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

The vines for the 2009 Tête de Cuvée Chardonnay were meticulously maintained to maximize fruit ripening. All bunches were exposed to direct sunlight through leaf removal to promote maturation and flavour development. 'Green harvest' – or the elimination of under-ripe bunches – was performed at the first sign of véraison. As a result of the cooler vintage conditions and our yield management practices, yields from these vineyards were very low; only 22.5hL per hectare (or 1.5 tons per acre). Low yields encourage ripening, flavour concentration and expression of our Beamsville Bench terroir.

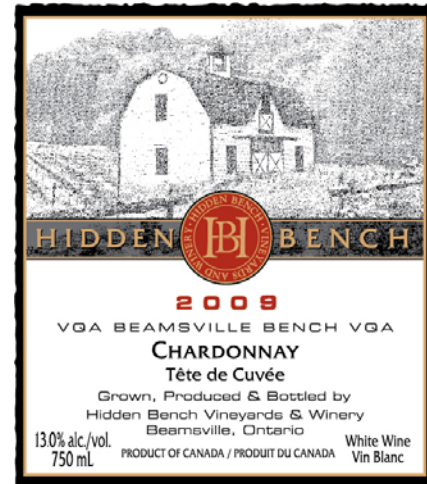
All clusters were handpicked, sorted and gently whole bunch pressed. The juice was cold settled for 4 days and then racked off the heavy sediment, warmed and transferred by gravity to barrels for fermentation. The wine was fermented with indigenous yeasts, with ferments reaching 22-24 degrees Celsius. Lees were stirred weekly during ageing to improve mouth feel.

TASTING

This classic cool-climate Chardonnay shows a rich toasty nose with baked apple pie and roasted hazelnuts which follow through on the palate. The finish is dry, mineral and complex, a result of the mature age of the vines. Ready to drink now it will benefit from aging for the next 5 years or more.

THE GROWING SEASON

The 2009 vintage can be characterized by the saving grace of the warmth of late August and the month of September. This six week period turned a challenging growing season into a classic.



Overall seasonal temperatures were lower than historical averages while precipitation levels were higher.

This required meticulous attention to detail in the vineyard with extreme yield management to ensure our fruit achieved the highest possible maturity. April, May and June were cool months with more rain than the same period over the last 5 years – 325 millimeters in a 90-day period!

New vineyard plantings benefited from this moisture, while our existing blocks required more attention than normal to limit vigor.

In July it was evident that extreme yield management was required to ensure the best quality fruit. Green harvesting, the removal of under-ripe grape bunches from each vine, was completed three weeks earlier than normal to enhance fruit maturity. Using precision viticulture, we meticulously maintained vine growth to expose fruit to the sun, encourage air circulation, which in turn opened up the canopy. Leaves were removed when they shaded grape bunches; vine shoots were positioned vertically to provide maximum exposure to the sun.

There was a positive change in mid-August and throughout September. This period of dry, warm weather truly enhanced the vintage. Flavours developed beautifully in the vineyard. The benefits of our extreme yield management were evident in mid-September and harvesting started the first week of October.

The harvest months of October and November were cooler than average thereby prolonging the vintage and allowed our fruit to ripen completely on its own terms. Cool climate viticulture contributes to the story of our *terroir* and vintage to vintage variation, adds to the notion of 'truth' in our wine.