



2011 ESTATE CHARDONNAY

WINEMAKING DATA

Harvest Dates: 19th of September to 10th of October, 2011
Brix at harvest: 21.5 – 22.5
Blend and grape source: 100% organically grown estate Chardonnay from the Locust Lane, Felseck and Rosomel Vineyards
Alcohol: 13.5% **pH:** 3.34
Residual Sugar: 1.5g/L **T.A.** 6.43g/L
Bottling Date: August 31st, 2012
Oak regime: 100% French Oak: 10% New, 10% 2nd Fill, 15% 3rd fill, 65% 4th fill and stainless steel barrels
Time in barrel: 9 months
Bentonite fined and Filtered



Silver Outstanding IWSC Awards



Silver National Wine Awards of Canada

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

The Chardonnay vines for this wine were meticulously maintained to showcase our Beamsville Bench *terroir*. All grape bunches were exposed to sunlight at fruit set by completely removing leaves on the East side and partially on the West side of the canopy to maximize ripening. Green harvesting – the removal of under-ripe bunches – was performed at the first sign of colour change in berries from green to gold. This is known as *véraison*. A meager 20hL per hectare was harvested (1.22 tons per acre) in 2011.

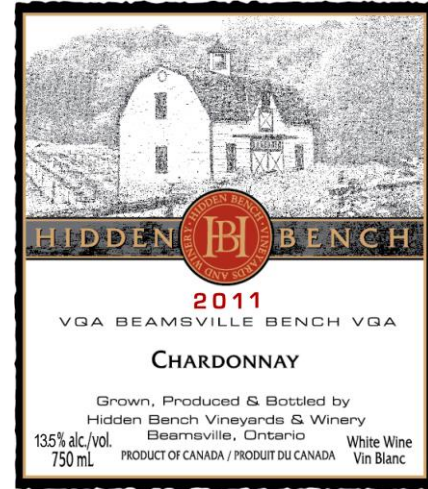
All fruit was handpicked, sorted and whole bunch pressed to yield the most pure juice. After cold settling for 24 hours, the juice was raked, warmed and then transferred to barrel. The wine was slowly fermented with indigenous yeasts reaching a peak of 22 degrees Celsius. Partial malolactic fermentation occurred naturally and all barrels were stirred weekly during fermentation. The barrels for this wine were selected and blended on July 7th, 2012, and filtered before bottling in August.

TASTING

The fragrant and perfumed nose shows aromas of white flowers, apricot and smoked almonds. The palate is appealing for its rich toast and creamy nature and finishes with an intense dry minerality. Best served at 12-14°C.

THE GROWING SEASON

2011 could be characterized as a year of contrasts! The start to the growing season was slow with cool and wet conditions (75mm



ESTATE SERIES

above average rainfall in April and May) experienced in early Spring until mid June. This was followed by an extended period of warm and dry weather from mid June until the end of September with above average temperatures and below average precipitation.

The harvest period was challenging as a number of unpredictable weather systems gave us significant above average precipitation from September 26th through October 5th. Fortunately we had already picked a significant portion of our younger vines and were able to let the older vine fruit hang until after this rainy period due to the lack of breakdown. Overall the growing season ended up being fairly normal for our cool-climate viticulture area with 1557 Degree days, a harvest period that ran from September 19th to November 7th, and a lower than forecast yield averaging under 2 tonnes /acre or approximately 30 HI /hectare of physiological and sugar ripe fruit.

The saving grace of the vintage for Hidden Bench was the meticulous vineyard, canopy and yield management of our vineyard team coupled with timely (read lucky!!!) picking decisions. Every decision was thoroughly debated and considered by the Hidden Bench vineyard and winemaking team. Despite numerous challenges, we were able to bring in our handpicked fruit at optimum ripeness and our extensive "triage" or sorting of the harvested fruit has yielded some excellent wines. The 2011 wines show wonderful potential and should be viewed as typical examples of *terroir* driven, cool climate wines with elegance, higher acids and lower alcohols, in other words, age-worthy, balanced and easy to pair with your favourite foods.