



2015 TÊTE DE CUVÉE CHARDONNAY

WINEMAKING DATA

Harvest Dates: 7th to 8th October, 2015

Brix at harvest: 22.6

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

Alcohol: 13.0%

pH: 3.16

Residual Sugar: 1.43g/L

T.A. 6.20g/L

Bottling Date: March 21st, 2017

Oak regime: 100% French Oak: 4% new, 42% 2nd fill, 43% 3rd fill and the rest neutral for the 1st 9 months, racked to 17% new, 17% 2nd fill, 66% 3rd fill and the rest neutral oak for a further 5 months

Vine age: Planted 1976 to 1998

Time in barrel: 14 months

Un-fined. Unfiltered. Certified Organic by Pro-Cert.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

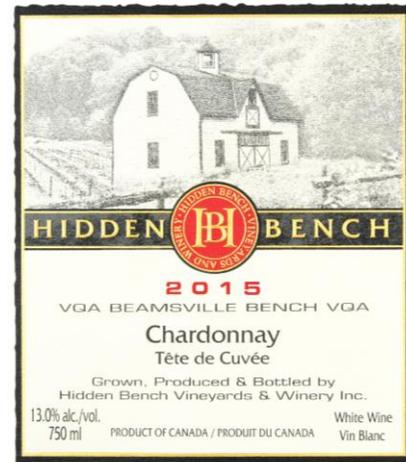
The vines for the 2015 Tête de Cuvée Chardonnay were meticulously maintained to showcase our Beamsville Bench *terroir*. All grape bunches were exposed to sunlight at fruit set by removing shading leaves on the East side and partially on the West side of the canopy to maximize ripening. Green harvesting – 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*. In 2015, yields were very low due to winter injury at 16hL per hectare or 1.0 ton per acre.

Vine age ranges from 17 – 39 years.

All fruit was handpicked, sorted and whole bunch pressed to yield the most pure juice. After cold settling for 24 hours, the juice was racked, warmed and transferred to barrel. The wine was fermented with indigenous yeasts reaching a peak of 20°C. Malolactic fermentation occurred naturally and all barrels were stirred bi-weekly during fermentation only.

TASTING

Our 2015 Tete de Cuvee Chardonnay has an intense fruit driven nose filled with notes of ripe apricot, dried pineapple and hints of pear. This leads into a broad mid-palate, richly textured, and framed by the subtle use of French oak. The finish is fresh and has lingering fruit notes of pineapple and tropical fruits. Drinking beautifully now, but this Chardonnay will reward those who have the patience to age it carefully for a few years.



94 points – David Lawrason

TERROIR SERIES

THE GROWING SEASON

The growing season in the lead up to vintage 2015 saw yet another winter characterised by record breaking, brutally cold temperatures and plenty of snow and ice. Persisting lower damage on our vines with many days spent worrying about their survival. Spring weather was relatively normal and the first evidence of bud break appeared on the 8th of May. High rainfall in June was followed by a very dry month of July. Mother Nature finally allowed normalcy to return and the summer brought excellent warmth and sunny conditions.

The beautiful warm weather lingered well into September, giving the vines a chance to slowly ripen fruit and gain phenological maturity. These favourable conditions lasted until the end of October, allowing for good sugar accumulation and harvest at optimal flavours on all of the varieties we grow. Vintage at Hidden Bench commenced on the 17th of September with Chardonnay and the last of the Bordeaux reds were picked on the 27th of October.

Despite lower yields following bud damage from 2014 and 2015, we saw an increase in yields in 2015. Quality of the 2015 vintage is exceptional due to the favourable ripening conditions and both the aromatic whites and wines in barrel show tremendous potential. Despite being dealt two severe winters in a row, our particular and unique location on the Beamsville Bench, as well as scientific, meticulous and thoughtful viticultural practices, ensure that our vines are on the road to recovery.