



2016 ESTATE CHARDONNAY

WINEMAKING DATA

Harvest Dates: 13th of September to 11th of October, 2016

Brix at harvest: 21.1-22.3

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

Alcohol: 13.0% **pH:** 3.27

Residual Sugar: 1.78g/L **T.A.** 6.28g/L

Bottling Date: August 22nd, 2017

Oak regime: 7% Concrete Egg. 93% French Oak, of which 17% New Fill, 6% 2nd Fill, 40% 3rd Fill and 37% 4th Fill

Time in Concrete/Barrel: 9 months

Certified Organic by Pro-Cert

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 removing shading leaves on the East side and partially on the West side of the canopy to maximize ripening. Green harvest – 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 healthy 36.7hL per hectare was harvested in 2016.

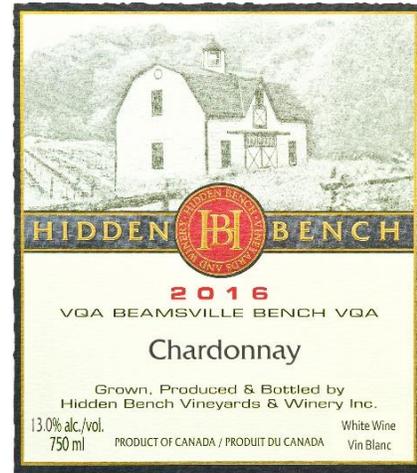
All fruit was handpicked, sorted and whole bunch pressed to yield the most pure juice. After cold settling for 24 hours, the juice was racked, warmed and then transferred to barrel using gravity. The wine was slowly fermented with indigenous yeasts reaching a peak of 20 degrees Celsius. Malolactic fermentation occurred naturally and barrels were stirred bi-weekly during fermentation. The barrels for this wine were selected and blended in July 2017 and filtered before bottling in August.

TASTING

A pale gold, this Chardonnay is luscious and approachable. Notes of pears and golden apple are supported with hints of toast and almond. With a rich and weighted body, the palate remains bright and lively. Drinking beautifully now, this wine will continue to evolve in bottle.

THE GROWING SEASON

Following a relatively mild winter, the season started off with an early but variable Spring with bud break starting around May 1st. By the end of May, conditions were much warmer and drier than normal and persisted well into the summer.



ESTATE SERIES

Soil moisture levels were much lower than the norm with most of the summer storms bypassing our Beamsville Bench vineyards. Younger vineyard plantings, with shallow root systems were most affected by the low soil moisture and the decision was made to remove the fruit and to hand irrigate these vines to give the vines a chance to avoid heat stress. Older, mature vines with deep established root systems showed no signs of stress and easily supported their balanced crop load.

The hot and dry weather, with a record breaking 33 days above 30°C, continued throughout the summer, with lots of bright sunshine and just enough rain to keep drought conditions from becoming too severe. Crop levels were good, with bunches increasing in size after the mid-August rains.

Harvest at Hidden Bench started on the 2nd of September with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay for sparkling base wines, followed by Rosé, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir around the middle to late September. Weather conditions were favourable throughout vintage with warm and dry conditions prevailing. Due to the dry conditions and meticulous vineyard and canopy management, disease pressure was minimal and it was a pleasure harvesting phenologically ripe and healthy fruit across all the varieties grown.

The exceptional weather of the 2016 vintage, permitted all wine varieties to show a lot of promise. Cool climate cultivars such as Riesling, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir show elegance and restraint, with typical Bench minerality, while the later ripening Bordeaux varieties show a richness with a ripe dark fruit character.