



2016 FELSECK VINEYARD CHARDONNAY

WINEMAKING DATA

Harvest Date: September 14 – October 10, 2016

Brix at harvest: 21.4 Brix Average

Blend and grape source: 100% organically certified estate

Chardonnay from the Felseck Vineyard

Alcohol: 13.0% **pH:** 3.25

Residual Sugar: 1.29g/L **T.A.** 6.91g/L

Bottling Date: March 21st, 2017

Oak regime: 100% French Oak for 10 months (18% new; 8% 2nd fill; balance neutral). Transferred back to Stainless Steel Barrels at 61%, with 8% 2nd and 3rd fills, balance neutral for additional 4 months.

Vine Age: 8 – 24 yrs.

Time in barrel: 14 months

Un-fined. Unfiltered.

Certified Organic by Pro-Cert

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Precise viticulture and acute attention to the needs of our vines allowed us to capture the essence of the Felseck Vineyard in 2016, during a very hot and dry growing season. A selection of different parcels of Chardonnay within the vineyard allowed us to create a complex, barrel-fermented wine. Almost ½ of the fruit comes from a legacy planting from 1992 with 'conventional' spacing in East-West row orientation, with the balance from younger, high-density vines from Dijon clones in North-South rows.

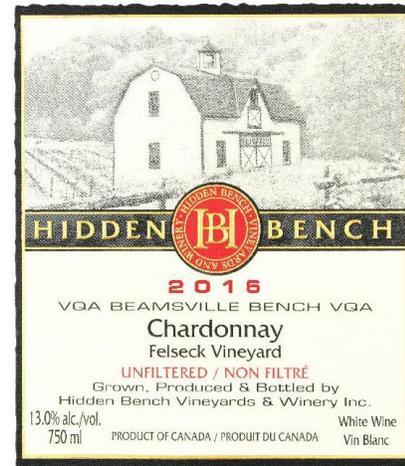
This array of raw material allows us to craft a wine that shows complexity with a very distinct "Felseck Character" that runs through all varietals grown within this *terroir*.

TASTING

This classic cool climate Chardonnay shows a rich, toasty nose with aromas of baked apple and tropical fruit, giving way to a layered palate of brioche, and beeswax. Lush and creamy, balanced by classic Felseck minerality on the palate. Ready to drink now, this Chardonnay will reward those who have the patience to age it carefully for a few years.

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.



TERROIR SERIES

By the end of May, conditions were much warmer and drier than normal, which persisted well into the summer.

Soil moisture levels were much lower than normal 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 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 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 in mid to late September. Weather conditions were favourable throughout vintage with warm and dry conditions prevailing. Due to these 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 varietals grown on our estate.

The exceptional weather of the 2016 vintage, permitted all grape varietals 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.