



2016 TÊTE DE CUVÉE CHARDONNAY

WINEMAKING DATA

Harvest Dates: September 28 – October 7, 2016

Brix at harvest: 21.1 – 22.4 brix.

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

Alcohol: 13.5%

pH: 3.30

Residual Sugar: 1.44g/L

T.A. 6.47g/L

Bottling Date: April 17, 2018

Oak regime: 100% French Oak: 25% new, 25% 2nd fill, 25% 3rd fill and 25% neutral. Blended in August 2017 then returned to Stainless Steel Barrels for 4 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 2016 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 was performed at the first sign of colour change in berries from green to gold. This is known as *véraison*.

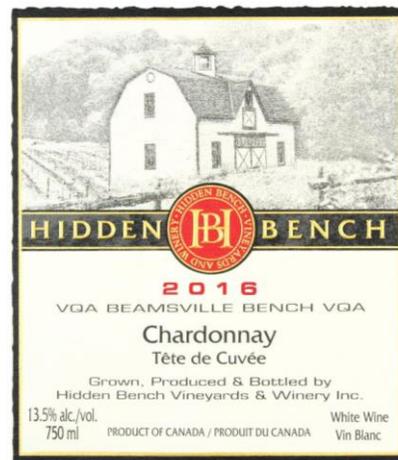
All fruit was handpicked, sorted and whole bunch pressed to yield the most pure juice. After cold settling for 24 hours, the juice was racked, warmed and transferred to barrel. The wine was fermented with indigenous yeasts reaching a peak of 20°C. Malolactic fermentation occurred naturally. Barrel selections were made in the summer of 2017 for this iconic wine prior to blending and returning to stainless barrels until winter 2018.

TASTING

The 2016 Tête de Cuvée Chardonnay shows a rich toasty nose with aromas of white blossom and brioche, giving way to a layered palate of toasted almond and yellow apple. It is richly textured with refreshing acidity and a long lingering finish. Beautiful now, this Chardonnay will continue to improve for the next 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.