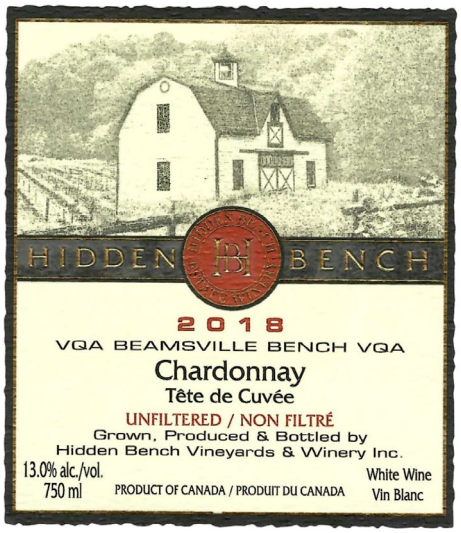
2018 TÊTE DE CUVÉE CHARDONNAY



TERROIR SERIES

WINEMAKING DATA

Harvest Dates: September 21 – October 1, 2018
Brix at harvest: 20.4 weighted average.
Blend and grape source: 100% certified organic Chardonnay from the Locust Lane (30%) and Rosomel (70%) Vineyards
Alcohol: 13.0% **pH:** 3.30
Residual Sugar: 1.9g/L **T.A**. 5.82g/L
Bottling Date: April 7, 2020
Oak regime: 100% French Oak: 42% 2nd fill, 14% 3rd fill, balance neutral. Blended in July 2019 then returned to 65% Stainless Steel Barrels, with the balance split between 2nd and 3rd fill barriques.
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 2018 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 purest 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 23˚C. Malolactic fermentation occurred naturally. Barrel selections were made in the summer of 2019 for this iconic wine prior to blending and returning to a mix of French barriques and stainless barrels until winter 2020. The wine was bottled unfiltered, unfined in April 2020.

TASTING

Opulent, but incredibly elegant, the 2018 vintage shows brioche and cream, caramelized chestnuts, with lemon curd, Red Delicious apples, and meringue. Rich, textural with a flinty minerality and salinity that adds complexity and substance. Pair with lobster risotto or halibut in browned butter caper sauce. Drink now, or age 5 -7 years for added complexity.

THE GROWING SEASON

After a very successful 2017 vintage, the earliest impacts on the 2018 growing season occurred on November 22nd, 2017 when late-season cold temperatures impacted the vines' ability to acclimate to the cold. As a result, some nascent buds were damaged during the winter, impacting crop size for 2018.

April was a cool and wet month. Temperatures rebounded in May and were slightly higher than average. Bud break started May 10th with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, and lasted approximately 7 days. After "bud break" some winter damage was noted viticulture practices were adjusted accordingly to assure the long-term health of our vineyards.

Flowering typically occurs around Summer Solstice, and 2018 was no different. Berries formed well for all varieties, though younger blocks of Chardonnay showed uneven berry set. July and August were noted for extreme heat and very dry conditions, with average day time temperatures just below 30c. Lack of moisture in the ground and the intensive, prolonged, heat, meant that harvest bunch weights were reduced by 30% resulting in much smaller overall yields in 2018.

Late August rains gave the vines the boost they needed to properly mature the fruit. The 2018 vintage is noted by concentration and fully ripened flavours. A smaller crop meant each block was harvested at optimal ripeness. The weather cooperated as picking started for sparkling wine on September 7th and finished with Cabernet Franc & Merlot on October 19th. A high-quality vintage with good aging potential!

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