

HIDDEN BENCH



2022 ESTATE CHARDONNAY

WINEMAKING DATA

Harvest Dates: September 21st to October 10th, 2022

Brix: 21.5 Weighted Average.

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

Appellation: VQA Beamsville Bench

Alcohol: 13.8% **pH:** 3.29

Residual Sugar: 3.0g/L **T.A.** 6.10g/L

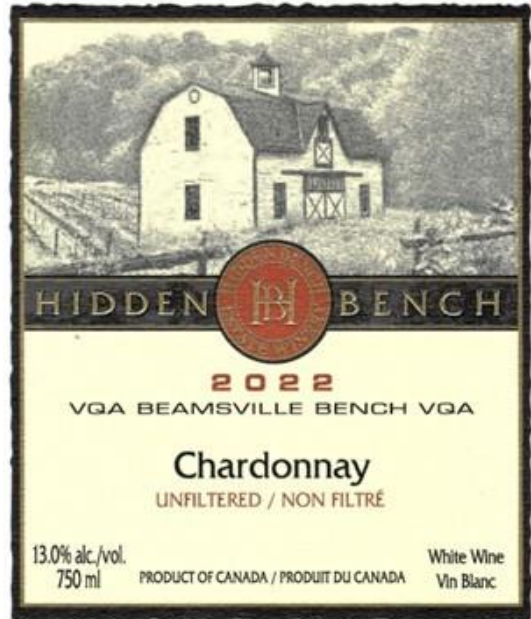
Bottling Date: August 30th, 2023

Oak regime: Crafted using a blend of French Oak barriques (228L) and large format puncheons (500L). 29% New Oak, 19% 2nd Fill, 10% 3rd Fill, and the balance neutral barrels.

Time in Barrels: 9 months

Unfinned and Unfiltered

Certified Organic by Procert



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 véraison in the berries from green to gold.

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/concrete by gravity. The wine was slowly fermented with indigenous yeasts reaching a peak temperature of 21-22 degrees Celsius. Malolactic fermentation occurred naturally in barrel. The barrels for this wine were blended in July 2023 and the wine was bottled unfinned and unfiltered in August 2023.

TASTING

Leads with aromas of caramel apple pie, toasted marshmallow, and orange blossom oil. The expressive palate is layered with flavours of stone fruit, cold cream, and warm baking spices like vanilla and cinnamon. The ripe fruit character of the 2022 vintage is balanced by refreshing acidity and subtle minerality indicative of our Beamsville Bench vineyards. Drink over the next 3 to 5 years alongside brown-butter and sage gnocchi, herb roast chicken or traditional boiled Canadian lobster.

THE GROWING SEASON

The 2022 vintage began with cold temperatures in January, with overnight lows close to -21°C. This cold snap caused some primary bud damage in low-lying areas. The higher-than-normal crop load and late season rains of 2021 meant that the vines were particularly susceptible to winter damage. These climactic factors resulted in a 25% reduction of grape yield for the vintage compared to our historical average yield.

Spring brought better weather with seasonal temperatures and minimal precipitation. Bud break started the second week of May, and the first signs of flowering were noted earlier than normal around June 16th. Peak flowering occurred just before the Summer Solstice and berry set was complete by late June.

The summer was moderate and dry, with seasonal rain fall. The main challenge in the vineyard was managing disease pressures, the result of high humidity from June through August and the vineyard team kept fruit clean through timely leaf removal, crop thinning, and a disciplined and timely organic spray program. The first signs of veraison were seen on August 4th.

Harvest began on September 8th with the last fruit processed on October 23rd. We were blessed with consistent, favourable weather during harvest that permitted us to choose pick dates based on flavor and ripeness. As is often said the quality of the vintage is determined by the weather in September and October, and overall, we are pleased with the quality of fruit we harvested in 2022, even if the quantity was less than we expected.