

THE HERMIT CRAB

Viognier Marsanne 2018

McLaren Vale, Viognier (62%) Marsanne (38%)



The Name

Many of McLaren Vale's vineyards are on free-draining soils underlain with limestone, formed by the calcareous remains of the local marine fauna. One such creature was the Hermit Crab, a reclusive little crustacean that inhabits the cast-off shells of others. The Osborn family thought the name appropriate for this, McLaren Vale's first ever blend of Viognier and Marsanne. "Hermit" is also an abbreviation for the French appellation of Hermitage, where the Marsanne grape variety dominates.

The Characteristics

An Incredibly fragrant nose full of sweet apricot and gingery spice. The palate is luscious and generous, but has great acid which tightens the wine, adding freshness and a clean crisp finish. Slight pithy feel which builds on the spice notes. Lovely as a fresh stand alone drink that still exhibits some mouthfeel, or equally well adapted to enjoying with a range of foods from freshly shucked oysters through to spicy Thai style dishes.

The Vintage

Quite a wet winter with July, August and September being way above average in rainfall. October, November and December were a little below average and January, February and March were more or less bone dry. Temperatures were mild until late January, so vines seemed to be delayed and harvest appeared like it was again going to be late. However, a few hot days and nights brought the ripening forward with slight sacrifice of acidity. The above average temperatures of February and March and the dryness made everything ripen relatively quickly. Yields appeared on the lighter side, because the heat and dry conditions did reduce them significantly, however they were still quite respectable across all varieties.

The Winemaking

Small batches of grapes are crushed gently and transferred to stainless steel basket presses. Fermentation is long and moderately cool to retain fresh fruit characters. About 4% underwent wild fermentation for extra complexity. 14% of the Viognier is fermented in aged French Oak to add mouth feel and support the subtle Viognier tannins. The Marsanne component received similar treatment, but was not blended until the final stages of the winemaking process.



Harvest dates	13 Feb - 11 Apr	Alcohol	13.5%
Residual sugar	4.9 g/L	Titratable acid	6.8
pH	3.20	Oak maturation	8 months
Chief Winemaker	Chester Osborn	Senior Winemaker	Jack Walton