



BELLVALE

GIPPSLAND

2024 'ATHENA'S VINEYARD' CHARDONNAY

About Bellvale

Bellvale was established in 1998, situated in Berrys Creek in the upper reaches of the Tarwin River valley in South Gippsland. The vineyards are at an elevation of 200 metres on a hill comprised of ancient red volcanic clay loam with free draining characteristics. The climate in Berrys Creek is cool, moderated by the presence of the Bass Strait some 30 kilometres to the south. The growing season is short and perfectly suited to the requirements of the Burgundian grapes that are grown.

The vineyards are planted at a very high density of 7100 vines per hectare with no irrigation. This approach limits the amount of fruit per vine and also provides competition between the vines which accentuates many favourable factors in the resulting wine. The fruit loads are limited as well with an average yield of 1.5 to 2 tonnes per hectare which provides full expression of the land, and avoids the dilution caused by overcropping. The lack of irrigation forces the vines to grow their roots great distances into the earth which in term provides the full expression of the terroir in the resulting wine. Over the years a quite distinct taste signature in the wines has been noted which relates directly to this particular hill and climate. Now that the vine age averages 15 years, full expression of the site has been attained.

Winemaking

The Bellvale Chardonnay vineyard is a hilltop with very lean soil with some gravel patches. There are 9 selected Burgundian clones. The wine is allowed to begin its ferment with its "wild" yeast and finished off at 25°C at the end. The elevage is 12 months, on stirred lees, in European oak , 10% new, followed by bottling and a minimum of 12 months in bottle before release. The 2024 has had 1 year in bottle before release which has given very favourable results.

Tasting Note

The growing season was rather cool with some rain. Harvest was at the end of March and the wine is crisp and fresh with layers of complexity, showing notes of ripe white peach and nectarine. The length and freshness combine to make the wine blend beautifully with a meal. One is reminded once again why Chardonnay from a site with a moderate climate can express such exquisite subtleties of flavour and texture. Alc 13%

