

THE HERMIT CRAB



Viognier Marsanne 2024

McLaren Vale, Viognier (53.5%) Marsanne (46.5%)

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 where the Marsanne grape variety dominates.

The Vintage

Early winter was wet, but late winter and spring were dry. Budburst was early, but mild weather delayed flowering. Late spring and early summer rain filled the soil profile for the first time in summer. High disease and vine vigor required significant attention. Warm, dry conditions in January and February favoured quality. Whites show high quality with good acidity. McLaren Vale Chardonnay, Riesling, and Sauvignon Blanc were harvested before the March heatwave, while other whites and reds benefited from it. Most premium Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon were harvested before the heatwave and show very good quality. Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese varieties thrived, producing excellent wines. Adelaide Hills had low yields but high quality.

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.

The Characteristics

A delicate golden hue and fragrant aromas of honeysuckle and jasmine lend an air of elegance to this wine. On the palate, ripe stone fruits take center stage, with peach and apricot leading the way, complemented by hints of cantaloupe, pineapple, and mango. The full-bodied, creamy texture is beautifully balanced by bright acidity, finishing with a lingering note reminiscent of pickled ginger slices. The mouthfeel is rich and indulgent, leaving a long-lasting and memorable impression. When served chilled, the wine's flavors are elevated, making it an ideal pairing for seafood, vegetarian dishes, or Asian cuisine.



Harvest dates	9 Mar - 21 May	Alcohol	14.0%
Residual sugar	4 g/l	Titrateable acid	6.0
pH	3.33	Oak maturation	8 months
Chief Winemaker	Chester Osborn	Senior Winemaker	Jack Walton