



Tasting Notes 2017 McCutcheon Chardonnay



Vintage Following an average rainfall and relatively warm winter, it was again the spring weather leading up to flowering which caused issues. October was our third wettest on record (96mm v 62mm average) and November saw our second coldest maximum and minimum temperatures (19.3° v 20.9°, 9.6° v 10.9°), consequently the budburst interval (budburst-flowering) was our longest ever – 87 days v an average of 75 days – and flowering was our latest ever (5 December v our 21 November average). In the end, due to the excellent February and March, hang time (budburst-harvest) was average – 205 days v an average of 204 days – and harvest date was close to average – 1 April v an average of 29 March. Yields are down because of the problems around flowering but summer and early autumn saw long, slow ripening – perfect for our Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

Vineyards :: Clones McCutcheon (Ridge Block 50%, Lake Block 50%) :: P58 (100%)
Harvest date :: Yield Hand picked 28 March 2017 :: 1.8 tonnes/ha (0.7 t/acre, ~10.8hl/ha)
Brix :: pH :: TA 21.6° (12.0° Baumé) :: 3.20 :: 8.2 g/l
Winemaking Grapes hand-harvested in late March, whole bunch pressed and the unsettled juice fermented by indigenous yeasts in 15% new 228 litre French oak barrels. A 10 month aging in barrel with no bâtonnage to keep wines fresher and more taut. Natural partial (74%) malolactic fermentation before bottling unfinned and filtered.
Winemakers Sandro Mosele, Martin Spedding
Aging :: Oak 10 months :: 15% new 228 litre French oak barrels (light toast; tight grain; Sirugue)
Malolactic Partial (74%)
Residual sugar Dry (0.59 g/l)
Finished pH :: TA 3.45 :: 6.6 g/l
Alcohol 12.5% (7.4 standard drinks/750ml bottle)
Production 134 dozen :: bottled 17 December 2017 :: screwcap
Release date Not yet released

TASTING NOTES As with the other 2017 Ten Minutes by Tractor Chardonnay releases, this is the most refined McCutcheon in living memory, even despite the vineyard tendency for more robust wines. Marzipan and matchstick funk over a palate that is so concentrated and offsets the subtle citrusy acid perfectly. The achingly low yields have delivered so little of this wine, and it's a shame – it's probably the most satisfying of all the single vineyard Chardonnay releases to drink now.

Andrew Graham [February 2019, commissioned by TMBT]

Food :: Temperature Crab soufflé. It's almost impossible to perfect this dish, but when right it's both energetic and light yet still richly flavoured. Just like this wine. Serve at 10–13°C.
Best drinking 2019-2029

REVIEWS