

THE HERMIT CRAB

Viognier Marsanne 2016

McLaren Vale, Viognier (72%) Marsanne (28%)



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 Vintage

The 2016 Vintage started a few days earlier than ever before due to the dry conditions, but relieving rains arrived in late January/early February, reducing stress for the final stages of ripening. The earlier harvested fruit achieved fruit ripeness at relatively low Baumes due to the rain event. These wines are bright, spicy and vibrant with a lovely long acid and elegance. As vintage progressed the concentration grew and the colour intensified, resulting in more weighty wines without overripe characters.

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 and American Oak to add mouth feel and support the subtle Viognier tannins. The Viognier and Marsanne components received similar treatment, but are not blended until the final stages of the winemaking process.

The Characteristics

A wine that really does offer something for a large array of individuals, from someone purely interested in a nice drink to those seeking to explore the nuances of these "alternate" varieties. The Viognier certainly takes centre stage on the nose in the guise of stone fruits, candied ginger and florals. In the background for those keen on honing their senses, Marsanne adds slightly more exotic notes of green mango, hay and almond. The palate has a lovely medium bodied weight to it, without any of that oiliness that over ripe Viognier can deliver. Precise acid throughout and a mild pithy texture on the finish ensure freshness and spice to keep the sweetness of the fruit in check. Fruity and spicy yet dry make this an all occasions wine.



Harvest dates	12 Feb - 1 Apr	Alcohol	13.6%
Residual sugar	4.3 g/L	Titrateable acid	6.1
pH	3.33	Oak maturation	8 months
Chief Winemaker	Chester Osborn	Senior Winemaker	Jack Walton