

Paul Cluver Seven Flags Chardonnay 2015

“The wine sees 25% new oak and 15% malolactic, has a bright, pale green colour, aromas of lemon, baking spices and wet stones and a focused, vivid palate, where the oak and the fruit concentration are very well balanced, underpinned by minerality.

95 points Tim Atkin 2016 Report

This wine combines site and barrel selection. It is the ultimate expression of the estate’s terroir - the culmination of dedication to the practice of viticulture and wine making.”

Vineyards and Vines

Currently there are 14.17 hectares planted to Chardonnay on the estate, which equates to 17.9% of the total plantings. Clones include 175, 270, 95 and 548. The first vines were planted in 1987 and the youngest blocks in 2010. Vines range in age from 6 to 28 years. The soil is predominantly decomposed Bokkeveld Shale with underlying clay layers of varying depths. Vines are planted on East, South east facing and South-South West facing slopes. Height above sea level ranges from 280 to 350 meters. The grapes for the Seven Flags Chardonnay is selected from the two oldest Chardonnay vineyards on the property and also the oldest vineyards in Elgin. These south facing vineyards are planted to clones 175 and 270.

Harvest report

Generally, a very healthy crop resulting from a very cool vintage. Harvesting started 16th February and continued until 4th of March. Average yield was 6.6 tons per hectare and grapes came in at 21.8° - 23.5° Brix at an average temperature of 15° Celsius. In 2014 we started picking at night resulting in the grapes arriving cool and fresh at the cellar, in the 2015 vintage we had the coolest night temperatures of the past eight years. The grapes for the Seven Flags Chardonnay was harvested on the 2nd and 4th of March 2015 from our oldest Chardonnay Vineyards planted in 1987.

Winemaking

After whole bunch pressing and settling without any settling agents, the wine was 100% wild fermented in a selection of French oak barrels. (25% new, the rest 2nd and 3rd fill.) Lees stirring was done to a much lesser degree than previous years to retain freshness. The wine remained on the lees for a total of nine months without any Sulphur addition. Only 10% of the wine went through malolactic fermentation, all without inoculation, further ensuring freshness and acidity. After tasting and blending trials, the wine was assembled from the best barrels, stabilized and prepared for bottling.

Tasting notes

Lots of buttered toast / brioche on the nose with some citrus aspects too. Tangerine fruit and citrus blossom fragrances are apparent, with hints of vanilla pod and almond flakes. These characteristics follow through onto the palate. The fine, fresh acidity is natural, and adds poise and focus to the wine.

Food pairing

Fish, poultry, pork and game bird dishes work well with this wine. It works particularly well with creamy pastas and salmon dishes. The good acidity and balance between wood and fruit keeps the wine from being overly rich and consequently great without food too. Mussel soup is a perfect match.

Analysis

Alcohol 13.04 %	Total Acidity 7.1 g/l	Residual sugar 1.9 g/l	pH 3.37
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Ratings

Seven Flags Chardonnay 2015 - John Platter 2016 – 5 Stars
Seven Flags Chardonnay 2015 - Decanter 2016 – Gold
Seven Flags Chardonnay 2015 – Tim Atkin 2016 – 94 points

