

# TAPANAPPA

## A U S T R A L I A

### TAPANAPPA 2017 TIERS VINEYARD 1.5M CHARDONNAY

#### *History Of The Vineyard*

In 1978 Brian Croser selected the Piccadilly Valley in the centre of the Adelaide Hills as the best terroir to grow Chardonnay for Petaluma Chardonnay and Pinot Noir and Chardonnay for Croser sparkling wine.

The Piccadilly Valley is the second coolest (after Foggy Hill at Parawa) and highest rainfall viticultural sub-region in South Australia and with an average heat summation for the growing season of just 1172°C days and an annual rainfall in excess of 1200 mm. The mean temperature of the hottest month January is 17.7°C. The Piccadilly Valley is a homo-clime of Dijon in Burgundy.

The soils in the Tiers Vineyard are free draining red-brown clay loams with a high content of clay (50%+) and of rock fragments. The 1600 million year-old Calc-silicate parent-rock of the soil was brought to surface by an ancient fault beneath Tiers Vineyard and small portions of the neighboring properties.

In 2003 the Croser family removed 1.3 hectares of the original Tiers Vineyard Chardonnay, planted in 1979 in the Piccadilly Valley as the first Adelaide Hills vineyard. The area was replanted with the French Bernard clones 76 and 95 on rootstocks on very close spacing and at only 0.5 meters above the ground. This unique section of The Tiers Vineyard produces earlier ripening, fuller flavoured Chardonnay than the 1979 old vine, OF clone Chardonnay on own roots across the centre road in The Tiers Vineyard.

#### *Vintage Notes*

2017 vintage was very late in each of Tapanappa's 3 distinguished sites. The single outstanding feature of the 2017 vintage was that each of the phenological events of the vine's growing season was delayed by 2 to 3 weeks compared to the average.

The wonderful feature of a delayed harvest is that the grapes undergo the heat sensitive final accumulation of aroma, flavour and colour in much cooler conditions.

The average temperature at Mount Lofty, adjacent to the Tiers Vineyard, is 17.6 °C in February, 15.25°C in March and 12.8°C in April.

Tiers Vineyard Was harvested on the 12th and 13th of March in the very warm 2016 vintage and on the 12th and 13th of April in the cooler 2017 vintage.

The difference of one month in harvest date is a difference of 2.5°C in the temperature during the critical ripening phase. That's huge!

My 2016 Vintage Report was headed "An Extraordinary Vintage" because the accumulated heat of the growing season in each of Tapanappa's distinguished sites was so much greater than in any preceding vintage. Tiers recorded a whopping 1539°C days against the average of 1240°C days.

I have labelled 2017 "A Contradictory Vintage" because the heat summation for the growing season was 1303° C days versus the 14-year average of 1240°C days: 2017 was a warmer than average vintage but it is the equal latest, harvested on the same date as the very cool 2011 vintage (1001°C days).

It is obvious 2017 should be later than 2016 but why was it as late as the much cooler 2011 vintage?

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For the answer to that question we have to reach back to the winter of 2016, which was one of the wettest ever, leaving the soils cold and saturated. Add to that a very cool spring and the vines were very reluctant to get out of bed and welcome the new spring. Bud burst was delayed by 2 to 3 weeks and that delay was carried forward to a late flowering in early December.

100 days into the growing season in early January the pattern reversed and the temperatures became consistently above average until at the end the season is described as warmer than average. But the die had been cast in those first 100 days and the season was later than average by 2 to 3 weeks.

This pattern of a cold start and a warm late finish is the perfect formula for outstanding fruit quality of intricate and intense flavours, moderate sugar levels and fine acids.

2017 was a very wet growing season at Mount Lofty. 562 mm's of rain were recorded for the seven months against an average of 302mm's. Fortunately most of that rainfall was before Christmas and after harvest in late April so had a more positive than detrimental effect.

2017 will be recognized as a superb vintage eliciting finesse and intensity in the Chardonnay from The Tiers vineyard and the Piccadilly Valley in general.

In 2003 I made the difficult decision to pull out 1.4 hectares of the original 1980 planting of the wonderful OF Chardonnay clone and to replant with the Dijon clones 95 and 76 on rootstock and at the close spacing of 1.5m between vines and rows. This was partly motivated as a strategy to deal with phylloxera if it should ever occur and partly to introduce new clones and viticultural conditions to achieve some variation of style and quality from The Tiers distinguished site. The 14 year old vines of Tiers 1.5m ripened earlier and more completely than the 37 year old OF Chardonnay clone vines on the eastern side of the vineyard.

The ideal vintage conditions in 2017 allowed Tiers 1.5m Chardonnay to show its best qualities.

### Winemaking Notes

The Tiers 1.5m Chardonnay was hand harvested into shallow trays and cooled to 2°C in the cold room at Tapanappa Winery, adjacent to the vineyard. The whole bunches of Tiers 1.5m Chardonnay were tipped from the trays into the Willmes Merlin airbag press. The juice was gently pressed from the bunches, into a settling tank. After a short gravity settling the partially clarified juice and its fluffy lees were racked to French Vosges oak barriques, 33% new and the balance 1 and 2 use.

The Tiers 1.5m Chardonnay was seeded with our own yeast culture and allowed to ferment in the cool air temperature of the Piccadilly Valley autumn.

Unlike the old Tiers none of the Tiers 1.5m Chardonnay went through malo-lactic fermentation because of its greater ripeness and lower natural acid at harvest. Tiers 1.5m Chardonnay was allowed to sit on full fermentation lees until clear racking in January of 2018.

2017 Tiers 1.5m Chardonnay was bottled in early March 2018.

The "in bottle" analysis of Tapanappa 2016 Tiers Vineyard 1.5M Chardonnay is;

|            |        |
|------------|--------|
| Alcohol    | 13.0%  |
| pH         | 3.2    |
| Total Acid | 8.2gpl |

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### *The Taste of the Wine*

2017 Tiers 1.5m Chardonnay is a pristine and exquisite expression of the Tiers unique terroir from a great vintage.

Pale green gold in colour, 2017 Tiers 1.5m Chardonnay has fresh ripe stone fruit aromas and flavours. The subtle complexity of yeast lees and oak complements the fresh fruit.

The hallmark Tiers Chardonnay texture is followed by a long after taste with a slight savoury quince finish.

The 14 year-old Tiers 1.5m Vineyard has clearly confirmed its status as a “distinguished site” and the 2017 Tapanappa Tiers 1.5M Chardonnay “*is a pure expression of a unique Australian terroir.*”

### *Winemaker*

Brian Croser

*Bottled March 2018. Only 400 dozen made.*