

TAPANAPPA

A U S T R A L I A

TAPANAPPA 2019 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 neighbouring properties.

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 15-year-old vines of Tiers 1.5m ripened earlier and more completely than the 39 year-old OF Chardonnay clone vines on the eastern side of the vineyard.

Vintage Notes

In 2019 we celebrated the 40th birthday of the wonderful Old Tiers Vineyard, a truly distinguished site.

This wine is from the 2003 re-planting of Dijon clone Chardonnay (clones 76 and 96) on rootstocks and very close spacing (1.5m x 1.5m) across the road from the Old 1979 Chardonnay block in the Tiers vineyard.

The defining moments of the 2019 vintage were at fruit set at the end of November.

Cold, windy and wet weather disrupted the flowering process and resulted in a tiny crop, the smallest since 2014. In 2019 vintage, the yield from Tiers Vineyard was 60% of average, a mere 4 tonnes/hectare.

2019, although warmer than average, was a return to more moderate vintage conditions than 2016 or 2018.

The growing season heat summation at the Tiers Vineyard was 1464 °C-days versus the average of 1093°C-days. Growing season rainfall was just 75% of average.

In summary 2019 is a very high quality, warm and dry vintage, honouring the time-tested aphorism *“the best quality wine is made from a cool climate vineyard in a warm year.”*

2019 Tiers 1.5M Chardonnay was hand harvested on the 18th of March at a sugar level of 23.0 Brix, pH 3.1, total acid (cold stable) of 6.3gpl and a high natural malic acid content of 2.83gpl.

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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 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.

None of the 2019 Tiers 1.5M Chardonnay went through malo-lactic fermentation because of the warmer than average vintage and the whole was allowed to sit on full fermentation lees until clear racking in January of 2020.

2019 Tiers 1.5M Chardonnay was bottled in February 2020.

The “in bottle” analysis of Tapanappa 2019 Tiers Vineyard 1.5M Chardonnay is;

Alcohol	13.8%
pH	2.98
Total Acid	7.9gpl

The Taste of the Wine

Because of the small crop, 2019 Tiers 1.5M Chardonnay is exquisitely concentrated.

Pale green/lemon in colour, the aroma is of white peach, canteloupe and the faint cinnamon and vanilla of Fench oak.

Typical of Tiers, the wine has a significant texture and is a riper and more advanced expression of the vineyard because of the earlier ripening Dijon clones..

Mellow and ripe the wine still has the finishing acid of the very cool climate Tiers Vineyard Again a light grape fruit bitterness lends a suitable end to the sweet fruit core of the wine.

2019 Tapanappa Tiers 1.5M Chardonnay is “a very ageworthy expression of this unique Australian terroir”.

Winemaker

Brian Croser

Bottled February 2020. Only 225 dozen grown and made.