

TAPANAPPA

A U S T R A L I A

TAPANAPPA TIERS VINEYARD 2007 CHARDONNAY

History

In 1978 Brian Croser selected the Piccadilly Valley in the centre of the Adelaide Hills because it provided the best terroirs in which to grow Chardonnay for the Petaluma Chardonnay, and Pinot Noir and Chardonnay for the sparkling wine Croser.

The Tiers Vineyard was the first vineyard planted in the Adelaide Hills since the 19th century. It is in the centre of the Piccadilly Valley at 450 meters elevation and is on the same site where Brian and Ann Croser live and where the Petaluma Winery was built in 1978.

The Tiers Vineyard has 3 hectares of 28 year-old Chardonnay on closer spacing of 3,330 vines/hectare with vertical canopy, the first Australian mainland vineyard on this hand-labour intensive configuration.

Another 1.5 hectares of the oldest vines on the Tiers were recently pulled out to make way for Dijon Chardonnay Clones 95 and 96 on devigorating rootstocks. These vines were planted on still closer spacing of 1.5m x 1.5m, or 4440 vines/hectare. The fruiting wire of the new vines has been reduced to 0.5m from the ground, from 0.8m in the older plantings, to take ripening advantage of ground warmth at night. The fruit from this newer planting of 1.5 hectares is blended with the older vine fruit in Tapanappa Tiers Vineyard Chardonnay.

The Piccadilly Valley is the coolest and highest rainfall viticultural sub-region in South Australia, 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 rock fragments. The 1600 million year-old Calc-silicate parent-rock of the soil was brought to surface by an ancient fault line, and it exists only beneath the Tiers Vineyard and small portions of the neighboring properties.

From 2005 Ann Croser, the owner, has agreed to divide the crop of the Tiers Vineyard between Petaluma and Tapanappa. Tapanappa selects its Tiers Chardonnay fruit from the thinner and rockier soils on the top of the slope and Petaluma harvests the belly of the slope.

Vintage Notes

2007 was a warm, moderate and dry harvest in the Piccadilly Valley, accruing 1210°C days of heat during the growing season, versus the average of 1172°C days.

The 2007 harvest of Tiers Chardonnay yielded a moderate crop level of 6 tonnes/hectare without fruit thinning. Rain events in January and March were sufficient to sustain the vines to achieve full fruit ripeness by the last week of March, about one week earlier than normal. The hand-harvested fruit was delivered in perfect condition to the winery, which is situated at the foot of the Tiers Vineyard. The analysis of the fruit at delivery was sugar 23.6 Brix, pH 3.34 and acid of 6.74 gpl as tartaric.

Winemaking Notes

Immediately upon arrival at the winery, the Tiers Chardonnay fruit was de-stemmed, crushed and chilled to 3°C on its way to the air bag press. Cold juice was gravitated away from the skins

through the press and only light pressings were added back. A small amount of SO₂ was added to the juice on the way to the tank where the juice was allowed to settle for 4 days. SO₂ was the only addition to the juice prior to fermentation.

The clear juice was racked to new (50%) and 1 use (50%) oak barriques from the French Vosges forest. A selected yeast strain, native to the vineyard, was added to initiate fermentation and the bacteria for the malo-lactic fermentation was added at the same time.

The primary fermentation was complete in 6 weeks after which the yeast lees were stirred in the barriques weekly until the malo-lactic fermentation was complete 2 months later. At the finish of malo-lactic fermentation the wine was racked from barrique, SO₂ was added and the wine was put back to barrique to sit on lees for a further 6 months.

After a total of 10 months in barrique, the 2007 Tapanappa Tiers Chardonnay was racked clear and prepared for bottling. The wine was bottled without filtration in January 2008.

The in-bottle analysis of 2007 Tapanappa Tiers Vineyard Chardonnay is:
Alcohol 13.59%, pH 3.16, total acid 6.29 gpl as tartaric, SO₂ 136 ppm, volatile acid 0.24 gpl.

The Taste of the Wine

2007 Tapanappa Tiers Chardonnay is a very typical wine of the Tiers Vineyard in a good vintage. The aromas are subtle varietal white peach and clove, with marzipan and brioche contributed by the malo-lactic, yeast lees contact and oak.

A consistent terroir feature of Tiers Chardonnay is the significant texture followed by a savoury finish and the persistence of the flavours. The 2007 Tapanappa Tiers Chardonnay will develop spicy honey and brulée characters with bottle age of up to 10 years.

Winemaker

Brian Croser

Only 850 cases produced.