

TAPANAPPA

A U S T R A L I A

TAPANAPPA 2015 TIERS VINEYARD CHARDONNAY

History

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 first vineyard planted in the Adelaide Hills since the 19th century, The Tiers Vineyard is in the centre of the Piccadilly Valley at 450 metres elevation next to the Tapanappa Winery and the Croser family home.

The Tiers Vineyard is 3 hectares of 31 year-old Chardonnay on closer spacing of 3,330 vines/hectare with vertical canopy, the first Australian mainland vineyard on this labour intensive configuration.

Another 1.5 hectares of the oldest vines on the Tiers were pulled out in 2000 and replanted with Dijon Chardonnay Clones 95 and 76 on devigorating rootstocks. These vines were planted on still closer spacing of 1.5m x 1.5m or 4444 vines/hectare. The fruiting wire of the new vines has been reduced to 0.5m from the ground from 0.9m 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 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.

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

2015 welcomed the Croser family back into the Tapanappa Winery and the Piccadilly Valley blessed us with a typical cool weather vintage of exemplary quality. The winter provided average rainfall and replenished the subsoil, but from August to December very dry conditions prevailed, The Tiers Vineyard receiving just 40% of normal rain.

The three spring months and December were much warmer than average, only exceeded by the temperatures preceding vintage 2016 and vintage 2010. The warm dry conditions led to an early and perfect flowering and fruit-set in the Tiers Vineyard Chardonnay and a balanced crop of 8 tonnes/hectare.

After December, the ripening months were cooler than average by about the same amount as the first three months were above average. Hence the 2015, seven month vintage heat summation coincided with the long-term average of 1173 C days. A January rain event relieved developing stress in the vines.

The Tiers Vineyard was planted in 1979 with the OF Chardonnay clone, a Californian derived clone with its roots in the mists of 19th century Mersault. This clone known as FPS 02A disappeared from California because it was suspected of carrying leaf roll virus, despite recognition of its superior winemaking characteristics. It doesn't have leaf roll, we are lucky

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to have it and it is ideally suited to the distinguished site of The Tiers Vineyard. In 2015 the vintage conditions allowed it to show its best qualities.

The cooler Eastern side of the Tiers Old Vineyard was hand harvested on the 17th of March two weeks earlier than average because of the warm early start to the season.

Winemaking Notes

The Tiers Old Chardonnay was hand harvested into shallow trays and cooled to 2C in the cold room at Tapanappa Winery, adjacent to the vineyard. The trays were tipped as whole bunches into the Willmes Merlin airbag press and the juice was gently extracted from the berries into a settling tank. After 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 and allowed to ferment at the cool air temperature of the Piccadilly Valley autumn. The Tiers Chardonnay was left on full lees in barrique until the summer when it was clear racked and prepared for bottling in mid March.

The post bottling analysis of 2015 Tiers Chardonnay is

Alcohol	13.6%
pH	3.09
Total Acid	7.6 gpl

The Taste of the Wine

2015 Tapanappa Tiers Chardonnay was early ripening because of the warm spring but cooler than average during the late summer ripening season. The alcohol is moderate and the natural acid is elevated as a balance to the ripe stone fruit flavours of Chardonnay from The Tiers Vineyard.

The 36 year-old Tiers Vineyard has clearly confirmed its status as a “*distinguished site*” and the 2015 Tapanappa Tiers Chardonnay “*is a pure expression of the unique Tiers Vineyard terroir.*”

Winemaker

Brian Croser

Bottled in March 2016. Only 180 dozen grown and made.