

TAPANAPPA

A U S T R A L I A

TAPANAPPA 2018 TIERS VINEYARD 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 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 was planted in 1979 with the OF Chardonnay clone, a Californian derived clone with its roots in the mists of Mersault. This clone known as FPS 02A was eliminated from California because it was suspected of carrying leaf roll virus, despite recognition of its superior winemaking qualities. It doesn't have leaf roll, we are lucky to have it and it is ideally suited to the distinguished site of The Tiers Vineyard.

The Tiers Vineyard is 3 hectares of 38 year-old Chardonnay on closer spacing of 3,330 vines/hectare with vertical canopy, the first Australian mainland vineyard on this labour intensive configuration.

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 1172oC 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.

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

2018 vintage was very warm in Tapanappa's Tiers Vineyard.

Although amongst the warmest vintages on record, 2018 Tiers Chardonnay was harvested on the long-term average date of March 26.

2018 Tiers Chardonnay harvest date of 26th of March was preceded by the 2017 harvested on the 13th of April, the latest ever and by the 2016 harvested on the 12th of March, the earliest ever.

I have labelled 2018 "Another hot one" because the heat summation for the growing season was 1511° C days versus the average of 1058 °C days (Mt. Lofty), not quite as warm as 2016 at 1583°C days but warmer than 2017 at 1303°C days.

It is obvious 2018 should be earlier than 2017 but why was it on average rather than earlier like 2016?

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The answer is that a lot of the above average heat in 2018 was at night. Higher but still moderate night temperatures don't affect vine physiology as much as day temperatures.

The January to March rainfall in the Piccadilly Valley was less than half of the average.

Despite being warm and dry there were no heat-waves in the Piccadilly Valley for the 2018 vintage. The Tiers Vineyard delivered disease free, thoroughly ripe Chardonnay fruit in perfect condition and at moderate sugar levels.

2018 will be recognized as a warm vintage eliciting ripeness and intensity in the Chardonnay from The Tiers vineyard and the Piccadilly Valley in general.

The warm vintage conditions in 2018 allowed it to show its best ripe fruit qualities.

Winemaking Notes

The Tiers Old 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 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 2018 Tiers Old Chardonnay went through malo-lactic fermentation because of the warm vintage and the whole was allowed to sit on full fermentation lees until clear racking in January of 2019.

2018 Tiers Chardonnay was bottled in early March 2019.

The "in bottle" analysis of Tapanappa 2018 Tiers Vineyard Chardonnay is;

Alcohol	13.5%
pH	3.0
Total Acid	7.5gpl

The Taste of the Wine

2018 Tiers Chardonnay is a warm vintage, ripe fruit expression of the Tiers unique terroir.

Lemon yellow in colour, 2018 Tiers Chardonnay has ripe and fresh fruit aromas and flavours of peach and fig. The subtle complexity of oak vanilla and toast and the brioche of yeast lees complements the fresh fruit.

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

The 38 year-old Tiers Vineyard has clearly confirmed its status as a "distinguished site" and the 2018 Tapanappa Tiers Chardonnay "is an exquisite expression of a unique Australian terroir."

Winemaker

Brian Croser

Bottled March 2019. Only 575 dozen grown and made.