



TASTING AND TECHNICAL NOTES

CLOUDY BAY CHARDONNAY 2007, RELEASED FEBRUARY 2009

A CHALLENGING SEASON REDEEMED BY AN IDEAL AUTUMN, PRODUCING A MODEST CROP OF RIPE, CONCENTRATED FRUIT WITH EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY

TASTING NOTES

An irresistible mix of ripe citrus and toasted nut aromas reminiscent of grapefruit, fig and pistachio biscotti taken with chamomile tea. The palate leads with savoury notes which give way to a taut citrus core, revealing the vibrant Marlborough fruit. Natural yeast fermentation and judicious oak handling combine to deliver a refined and textural finish. Expect the 2007 Cloudy Bay Chardonnay to age gracefully over the next five to seven years.

VINEYARD

The grapes are predominantly the Mendoza clone sourced from Cloudy Bay Estate and grower vineyards located throughout the Wairau and Brancott Valleys. Soils vary from the silty gravels found in Rapaura, to the fine silty loams of Renwick, and the aged alluvial gravels of the Brancott Valley. Mendoza is a typically modest cropping chardonnay clone with a high incidence of small, currant-sized berries that have a high skin-to-juice ratio, hence it produces very concentrated flavours. The vineyards are planted at a density of 1,850 vines per hectare and most vines are trained to the vertical shoot position (VSP) trellis system. In 2007 the vineyards yielded an average of 9.5 Tonnes/hectare.

THE SEASON

Budburst in Marlborough was once again earlier than normal and the growing season in the Wairau Valley raced off with a frost free start. However, early predictions of a bumper crop were quashed during the coldest December in 50 years, affecting the later flowering varieties, especially Sauvignon Blanc. Cooler than average weather conditions prevailed through most of the summer, bringing the season back from its early start and putting worried looks on many a winemaker's face. But, the beginning of autumn brought the arrival of a true 'Indian Summer' and the vineyards ripened rapidly under sunny, blue skies.

HARVEST

The chardonnay harvest commenced on the 23rd of March and finished on the 21st of April. The settled April weather allowed each block to fully ripen. Fruit composition averaged 23.8 Brix, pH 3.28 and titratable acidity 9.5g/l.

VINIFICATION

The majority of the crop was hand-picked and loaded directly into tank presses to minimise fruit handling and enhance palate structure. The remainder of the fruit was machine-harvested into small bins and pressed in the same fashion. After settling, the majority of the juice was transferred directly to barrels and allowed to ferment using indigenous yeast strains before going through malolactic fermentation. The rest of the juice was transferred to stainless steel tanks and inoculated with a cultured yeast strain, before being transferred to barrel to complete fermentation. The individual components were blended after one full year in French oak barrels (a low proportion of which were new) and the wine remained on yeast lees for a further period prior to a light fining for clarification, then bottling in July 2007 (under screwcap). Final analysis shows an alcohol of 14.0v/v, pH 3.22 and acid of 7.1g/l.