



FELTON ROAD

2018 Felton Road Chardonnay *Block 2*

Tasting Note

Inviting aromas of white blossom, delicate peach and hints of citrus. Not obvious or overt: just balanced and uncomplicated. However, the palate is where it all becomes more serious with nutty and complex flavours, both mouth-coating and alluring. Harmonising time in barrel (16 months), but no new oak, avails a revelatory transparency promoting an emphasis on site expression. The deep schist soils of Block 2, without make-up and winemaking artefact, are plainly evident in the long and mineral finish.

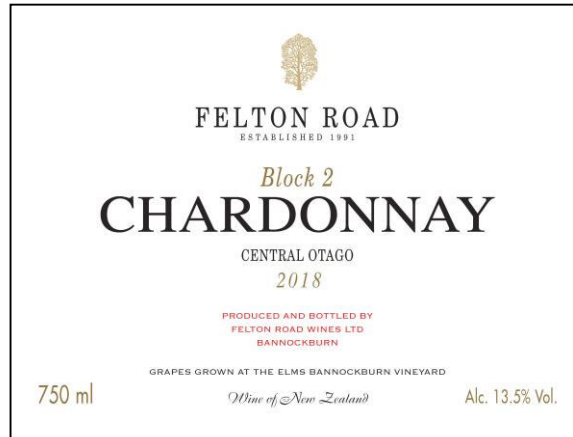
Introduction

Beginning with meticulous site selection and vineyard design started in 1991, Felton Road's story is one of refusal to compromise. A strict 100% estate policy with fully organic and biodynamic viticulture (Demeter certified) ensures that our fruit arrives at the winery as pure as it can be, while our entire estate comes as close to true sustainability as is possible. A commitment to hands off winemaking: gravity flow, wild yeasts, wild malo, an avoidance of fining and filtration all help preserve the wine's expression of its terroir. The result is Riesling, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir which accurately express the authenticity and complexity of our unique vineyards.

Gareth King; Viticulturist, Blair Walter; Winemaker, Nigel Greening; Proprietor.

Vineyard & Viticulture

Felton Road farms four properties totaling 32 ha in the Bannockburn sub-region of Central Otago. Block 2 was planted in 1992 and is positioned on a gentle east facing slope of deep angular schist soils immediately north of Block 3 on The Elms vineyard. Meticulous summer management of a single vertical shoot positioned (VSP) canopy ensures even and early fruit maturity. Shoot thinning, shoot positioning, leaf plucking, bunch thinning and harvest are all carried out by hand to ensure optimum quality fruit. Cover crops are planted between rows to assist in vine balance and to improve soil health and general biodiversity.



Vintage

A vintage characterised by exceptional heat, with warmer than normal overnight temperatures being of particular note from October through January. As has often been the case, this was a vintage of two halves. When our calendars moved from January to February, the turning of the page was both literal and figurative. Temperatures crashed back down to ordinary levels (in fact, the coolest in 14 years) and the drought was broken by the wettest February on record. This cool and wet month slowed the ripening considerably and fortunately allayed our concerns for the potential style and quality of the wines; due to the preceding warm months and advanced season. Harvesting began early on 28 February and proceeded in an orderly and measured pace over the next three weeks.

Vinification

Mendoza clone Chardonnay from Block 2 was whole bunch pressed and flowed immediately (without settling) by gravity to barrel in the underground cellar. Fermentation with indigenous yeasts in seasoned French oak (no new oak) was followed by a long and complete malolactic over the spring and summer. After 16 months in barrel the wine was racked to tank for bottling in late-August 2019. The wine was not fined or filtered.

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