



FELTON ROAD

2019 Felton Road Chardonnay *Bannockburn*

Tasting Note

Delicate citrus flowers, jasmine followed by hints of peach. A substantial but taut palate, honeysuckle, creamy stone fruit and citrus, mouth-filling and generous, but always with nervous tension, then tightening to a stony and saline finish. A definitive (maybe “The” definitive) example of our Bannockburn Chardonnay. Detailed, precise, long and very satisfying.

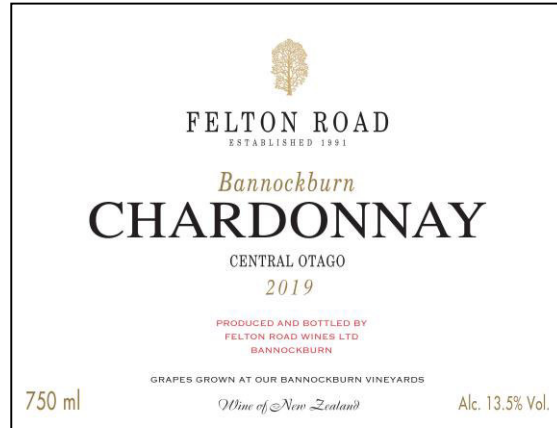
Introduction

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 (BioGro and 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 totalling 32 ha in the Bannockburn sub-region of Central Otago. Chardonnay is mostly grown on the Elms vineyard in Blocks 2, 6, 8 & 9; plus approximately 10% coming from Cornish Point vineyard. There are a range of altitudes and aspects with the soils mostly deep alluvial schist gravels. 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 season at first remarkable for its persistent rhythm of rain events throughout spring and early summer. Approaching double our long-term average, we never saw more than two weeks without significant precipitation. These wetter seasons however, are usually very welcome, as with our normally excessively dry climate, increased natural moisture is almost always positive for vine health and fruit quality. Heat summation for the season was slightly above normal with healthy green canopies and inter-rows right through to harvest. Yields were naturally moderate with maturity arriving rapidly: the harvesting of Chardonnay began on March 30 and was complete by April 4. Bunches were of perfect health: bright and intense fruit flavours with excellent acidity.

Vinification

Various clones of Chardonnay (Mendoza, B95, B548, UCD6) were carefully hand harvested from Cornish Point and The Elms vineyards. The grapes were whole bunch pressed with the juice flowing to barrel by gravity after overnight settling. Fermentation in French oak (mostly well-seasoned barrels with less than 10% new) with indigenous yeasts has produced a wine with considerable complexity. A long and complete indigenous malolactic fermentation with only periodic stirring of the lees (Batonnage), combined with 11 months on full lees; has softened the acid for a rich and complex mouthfeel. In accordance with our non-interventionalist approach to winemaking, this wine was not fined or filtered after spending 13 months total in barrel.