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2008 HEYTESBURY CHARDONNAY

winemaker	Virginia Willcock	alcohol	13.0 %
harvested	February / March 2008	total acid	6.9 g/L
wood	French oak barriques – 9 months	ph	3.22
bottled	February 2009	residual sugar	1.4 g/L

REGION

Margaret River

GRAPE VARIETIES

Chardonnay

INTRODUCTION

Margaret River Chardonnay has developed a strong reputation and following throughout the world. It is recognized as a more modern style of Chardonnay, focusing on the fruit attributes and allowing oak and fermentation complexities to support, not overwhelm, the delicate nature of Margaret River Chardonnay.

The Heytesbury Chardonnay represents the best Chardonnay Vasse Felix can produce from fruit grown in the Margaret River region. It is a selection of the best barrels from the best batches of Chardonnay that best represent the vintage.

WINEMAKERS COMMENTS

January and February were warm, resulting in the Chardonnay fruit arriving at the winery earlier than usual. Nights were still relatively cool and the days dry, allowing the fruit to achieve the varietal definition and aroma characteristics that Margaret River is well known for.

45% of the fruit used was handpicked and whole bunch pressed, with the balance picked in the cool of the night, preserving vibrant fruit character. The fruit provides clean citrus characters, and white peach and stone fruit nuances come through on the mid palate. The retention of the natural acidity is a priority, so no malolactic fermentation was introduced. The juice was pressed off and the free-run separated before settling overnight. The wine was then racked to barrels with varying levels of solids, helping to achieve more intense fermentation characters and palate weight. All batches used for the 2008 Heytesbury Chardonnay were fermented 'wild' with no yeast added to the juice. Maturation was in French oak barriques, of which 70% were new. The Chardonnay batches were stirred throughout maturation, allowing the lees to impart further complexity to the texture and palate weight of the wine. The best batches of Chardonnay were then selected, and individual barrels from each batch were blended to create the 2008 Heytesbury Chardonnay.

TASTING NOTES

The 2008 Heytesbury Chardonnay is a lovely bright straw with a subtle green hue. Vibrant aromas of spiced pears, apple and orange blossom combine with a hint of toasted vanilla bean, showing the complexities achieved through natural fermentation, increased solids, and stunning French oak. Incredible high notes of sweet thyme, lime and white peach add a fresh, savoury element to this beautifully complex nose.

The palate is fresh and tight, with restrained fruit weight complimenting the structure and texture of the elegant French oak tannins. Delicate oak spice sits beautifully with fresh citrus, paw paw and bright floral notes. A seamless mineral acidity contributes to a long, crisp, yet silky finish.