



SACRED HILL

RIFLEMAN'S CHARDONNAY 2016 HAWKE'S BAY

BRAND STORY

The Rifleman's Vineyard is set on a beautiful, elevated river terrace. Our grapes have always thrived there – and, in the early days, so did the birds. With no other food source for some distance they gorged daily on our precious fruit. We responded with equal fervour, brandishing shotguns while riding the quads or walking the block. When we'd successfully harvested and pressed to barrel, we chalked up 'Shotgun Chardonnay' on the barrelheads. When it came to bottling we decided on a more positive spin and called the wine Rifleman's – the name of a little known native bird, whose Maori name, Titipounamu, means Little Greenstone.

VINTAGE SUMMARY

Vintage 2016 was somewhat of a roller coaster ride, with erratic weather, cool early summer, a blistering February, and culminating in a very successful harvest. Whew! Despite dire predictions of an extreme El Nino weather pattern that would bring hot dry winds and drought, Hawke's Bay experienced a cool and variable spring and early summer, with growing degree days running behind average. February however came in hot and strong, with very hot and dry conditions that caught up the ripeness on all varieties. March and April were smooth sailing, with threats of rain not materialising to any significant degree.

This proved to be a great Chardonnay vintage. The vines were not overly vigorous and had moderate crop loads, and the cooler spring and early summer seems to have retained freshness in the wines. We harvested totally pristine fruit with excellent ripeness and acid balance, along with good intensity and persistence.

WINEMAKER'S NOTE

Intriguing, lifted aromas of ripe mandarin peel, nectarine, hazelnut and vanilla bean with nuances of nutmeg and lemon meringue. The palate is extremely intense with a seamless flow of sweet citrus notes and baked apple. Finely knit and very classical with sensational length - the hallmark of this iconic vineyard.

VINIFICATION

Hand-picked fruit, from our 26 year old own rooted Mendoza was whole bunch pressed to retain delicacy and low phenolic impact. Briefly settled then transferred to tightly grained French oak barriques, 80% of which were new, for ferment with indigenous yeasts. With over 20 years of winemaking this single origin Chardonnay, our oak selection has been refined to those barrels that work synergistically with the vineyard. Natural malolactic ferment (100%) followed primary ferment, with occasional lees stirring to build texture and richness. Ageing in our temperature controlled barrel room for 12 months ensures freshness and retains the power and elegance of this wine. Minimally handled to bottle.

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WINEGROWING



HAWKE'S BAY,
NEW ZEALAND

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VARIETY	Chardonnay
REGION	Hawke's Bay
FOOD MATCHES	Strongly flavoured seafood or pork dishes
CELLARING	5 – 10 years
RS	Dry
ALCOHOL	13 %
PH	3.48
TA	5.92 g/L

WINEMAKER	Tony Bish
HARVEST DATE	27/03/2016
FRUIT SOURCE / SUB REGION	Rifleman's Vineyard, Dartmoor Valley, Hawke's Bay
1ST YEAR OF PRODUCTION	1995
BOTTLING DATE	21/04/2017
CASES PRODUCED	707 dozen