

PENLEY ESTATE

1998 CHARDONNAY TASTING NOTES

Release: November, 1999
Variety: 100% Chardonnay
Area: Coonawarra/McLaren Vale
Analysis: Alcohol 13.6%, Acid 6.7g/l., pH 3.22
Country: Australia

Objective: The objective of the winemaker has been to create a crisp, young style wine with soft fruit flavours so it can be consumed now, but the fine acid length of mellow French oak will aid bottle maturation (1-3 years from vintage date).

The Wine: The colour is medium yellow with touches of grapey green. An aroma is emphasised by melon and grassy fruit with a hint of soft French oak. The flavours are soft and smooth with lingering melon fruits. The oak is quite discernible but enhances the grape flavours. This white wine shows slightly enhanced complexity through some Malolactic fermentation. This gives greater softness and drinkability. The 1998 vintage has produced a very elegant wine with rich fruit flavours. The overall impression is one of soft, discernible fruit with a clean acid and rich oak background.

The Oak: Penley's style is based on the harmony of oak and fruit. However it is important to have subtle oak not dominant oak, and this has always been the objective in making this wine. Fermentation of a percentage of this wine in French Vosges and burgundian blend oak is essential, with a portion kept in stainless steel tank, of which a small part will undergo malolactic fermentation.

Vintage

Comment: Above average yields but wines well structured and deeply coloured and flavoured. Classic, rich, ripe and intense.

Late winter, early spring rain ensured plenty of important moisture for the growing season. Budburst, flowering and fruit set was even amid calm and mild weather. Summer continued with ideal warmth and little rain, no extremes ensured long, even and slow fruit maturation.

Harvest earlier than 1996 and 1997 vintages with warm days and cool nights. Some late rain in April, though significant, it fell rapidly followed by sunny and drying conditions.

Penley's Winemaking

Style: The balance is a key feature in all Penley Wines. This ensures that this Chardonnay will mature successfully in bottle, but with Australia's rich flavours can be enjoyed now whilst the fruits are youthful. Quality new French oak, barrel fermentation, partial lees stirring and 20% MLF.

Complexity of flavour, oak and acid make this an excellent food wine. The finely tuned acids allow crispness that many New World Chardonnays' lack. Fruit flavour is not dominated but enhanced by oak.

Awards: Awards are now generally given to wines already bottled and labelled. Hence any awards are more likely in the year of sale.

Bronze Medal Class 26 2000 Perth Wine Show

Bronze Medal Class 13 1999 Queensland Wine Show (Royal National Association)

Bronze Medal Class 13 1999 Royal Perth Show

88/100 Wine & Spirits Annual Buying Guide (Special Issue Winter 2001)