

THE STONE GIANTS

2024 CHARDONNAY
BRIDGE PA TRIANGLE, HAWKE'S BAY



Hawke's Bay's western ranges and the volcanic peaks of the Central Plateau are integral to the character of the inland vineyards of Hawke's Bay. They not only provide shelter from the prevailing westerly weather, but over millennia have also been the source of deep gravel beds, windblown loess and volcanic ash that make up these exceptional viticultural soils. Mountains were often personified as giants in legend, and in naming this wine we imagined a tale of Titans in a violent struggle, raining rock and ash into the plains and valleys below. A past of tectonic upheaval, fractured rock and and fiery volcanos, belied by the quiet pastoral landscapes of today.

Wine

A particularly intriguing Chardonnay, quite unlike any other I have made. Exceptionally complex, yet not in a showy way, it has a structure that epitomises the notion of restrained power. A concentration and presence that is drawn out, linear and lithe rather than broad shouldered and heavy set. The fruit profile includes subtle white peach, clementine, cashew and a hint of orange blossom laced with subtle struck match / gunsmoke, roasted nut, shortbread and spice including clove, nutmeg and mace, there is a mineral element to the aromatics too, suggestive of petrichor / hot stone and iron. On the palate, the wine is full but bone dry and very tightly focused, driven by an excellent acid line, grainy stone like texture and a savoury, saline finish that makes it an exceptionally good food wine.

Site

Grown on a small block in the Bridge Pa Triangle, in the south west corner of the Heretaunga Plains, this low altitude, inland area is well sheltered from the cooling afternoon sea breeze making this the warmest of the three sub regions we source from. Soils here are low fertility, free draining deep alluvial greywacke gravels, overlaid by a shallow topsoil of windblown loess and iron rich volcanic ash. The combination of climate and soil delivers wines of underlying power and complexity that still maintain a freshness of structure, and underlying hot riverstone / ferrous minerality. Making Chardonnay in this sub region is a relatively new exploration for me, but we're exceptionally chuffed with what we have achieved so far. The wines are distinctively different, yet in no way inferior to those grown in the Tukituki Valley and Havelock.

Vintage

2024 was an exceptional Chardonnay vintage in Hawke's Bay, with warm sunny weather and regular summer rainfall events, the vines went into an extremely dry harvest season with healthy green canopies and good overall balance. Crops were naturally very low and this has translated to a natural underlying power in the wines. The warm growing season led to one of the earliest ever Chardonnay harvest in Hawke's Bay and fruit was picked in pristine condition with vibrant flavours and fresh natural acidity.

CHRIS
SCOTT
WINES

THE STONE GIANTS 2024

Continued.

Winemaking

Clone 1066 was hand harvested on the 26th of February at 22.1 brix, followed by a small pick of clone 548 (~11% of the blend) at 21.5 brix on the 28th. 1066 is a relatively new clone to New Zealand that I refer to as the Uber-Mendoza, as it is even more susceptible than that famous clone, to hen and chicken (poor fruit set that results in many small, seedless berries, or chickens). The resulting meagre crop and high skin to juice ratio leads to full, flavourful wines, all kept in check by a taught line of natural acidity.

The fruit was whole bunch pressed directly to barrel on full solids and wild fermentation is allowed to ensue. Lees stirring is kept to a minimum, employed only to help the primary and malolactic fermentation to finish fully, after which time the barrels are fully sealed with a small sulphite addition and allowed to mature for a total of 11 months. Again this helps to preserve fruit freshness and sense of minerality, without any excessive heavy lees character. After each individual barrel was evaluated for quality the wine was racked to a blend in January 2025 and was allowed to mature further on light yeast lees in tank for 7 months. This was long enough to achieve natural clarity through settling only, and wine was bottled without any fining, stabilisation or filtration. 22% new oak was used in the final blend, and the wine carries this effortlessly.

Technical Information

- Vine age 6 years
- Vine spacing 1.4m
- Row spacing 1.6m
- Pruning two cane VSP
- Av yield 5.3 t/ha or 1.19 kg/vine
- Clonal selection 89% 1066, 11% 548
- Oak: 228 L Burgundy barrels. 22% new, 26% second fill, 52% fourth fill
- Yeast: Wild
- MLF Bacteria: Wild
- Fining, stabilisation and filtration: None
- Alc 13.62%, TA 8.0 g/L, pH 3.03, RS 2.7g/L
- Closure: Diam Origine 30 49mm (wax sealed for reduced oxygen ingress). A technical cork made from cork particles that have been purged of impurities and bound with natural plant polymers and beeswax. TCA free and will perform consistently in every bottle for at least 30 years. In our trials to date they have outperformed both natural cork and screw cap.

Total Production 1050 bottles

We expect The Stone Giants to age gracefully for 10 years or more from vintage date.

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