



FELTON ROAD

2023 Felton Road Chardonnay *Bannockburn*

Tasting Note

Pure grapefruit zest, citrus, stonefruit kernel, a hint of roasted nuts, all bound in enlivening acid. The satisfying palate weight carries the acid completely without effort; it just shrugs it off. Very clean, already showing some length, which will no doubt build gracefully. A pleasing absence of oak notes...in fact a pleasing absence of everything but essence of Chardonnay. A definite candidate for benchmark.

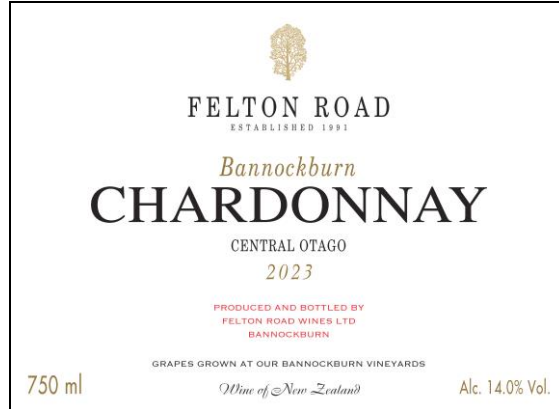
Introduction

Commencing with meticulous site selection and vineyard design 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 34 ha in the Bannockburn sub-region of Central Otago. Chardonnay is mostly grown on the Elms vineyard in Blocks 2, 6, 8 & 9, with approximately 10% coming from Cornish Point vineyard. There are a range of altitudes and aspects with the soils mostly deep 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

Spring temperatures and rainfall were normal with only a couple of mild frost events which were successfully fought. Flowering proceeded in warm and relatively stable weather and resulted in setting a normal sized crop across all three varieties. December was warm and dry with these conditions further exacerbated over the next several weeks until a welcome rain event on February 21. With the relatively dry conditions prevailing for the previous months, this event and the periodic rain throughout March (but still only 43mm recorded), did not present any disease pressure issues and provided welcome relief to the warm and somewhat previous stressful conditions. Cooler night temperatures arrested the ripening for slow and steady development. Harvest commenced on March 23, and fears of an early, hot and fast harvest were fortunately not realised.

Vinification

Various clones of Chardonnay (Mendoza, B95, B548) 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 just 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.

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