2012 FELSECK VINEYARD CHARDONNAY

WINEMAKING DATA

Harvest Date: 7th to the 13th of September, 2012
Brix at harvest: 21.1 -22.6
Blend and grape source: 100% organically grown and certified estate Chardonnay from the Felseck Vineyard
Alcohol: 13.5%   **pH:** 3.34
Residual Sugar: 1.84g/L   **T.A**. 5.99g/L
Bottling Date: March 10th, 2014
Oak regime: 100% French Oak: 44% new and the rest neutral for the 1st 9 months; racked, same barrels for a further 6 months
Time in barrel: 15 months
Filtered

TERROIR SERIES

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

The vines for this wine were meticulously maintained to showcase our Beamsville Bench *terroir*. All grape bunches were exposed to sunlight at fruit set by completely removing leaves on the East side and partially on the West side of the canopy to maximize ripening. Green harvesting – the removal of under-ripe bunches – was performed at the first sign of colour change in berries from green to gold. This is known as *véraison*. A healthy 35.6 hL per hectare was harvested (2.2 tons per acre) in 2012 from the Felseck Vineyard (planted in 1992).
All fruit was handpicked, sorted and whole bunch pressed to yield the most pure juice. After cold settling for 24 hours, the juice was racked, warmed and transferred to barrel. The wine was fermented with indigenous yeasts reaching a peak of 22 degrees Celsius. Malolactic fermentation occurred naturally and all barrels were stirred weekly during fermentation only.

TASTING

Golden in colour, showing rich aromas of roasted almonds, butterscotch and marmalade. Considering the heat of the vintage, the wine shows fresh acidity, balancing the concentrated and creamy mid-palate. Asian spice lingers with good minerality on the finish, true to its Felseck Vineyard origin.

THE GROWING SEASON

The 2012 growing season can be characterized as an almost perfect example of what the potential impact both positive and negative can be of global warming on the viticulture of our region. We experienced a very warm and mild winter which permitted our vineyards not to experience any cold damage as the coolest temperature we experienced was -16 C which is well above the threshold for any bud damage. This warm winter lead to an early bud break in late April which caused us some acute anxiety on the weekend of May 5th and 6th as we experienced temperature well below freezing.
We were able to mitigate damage to the buds of our vines (particularly Chardonnay) by using a helicopter to keep the cold air
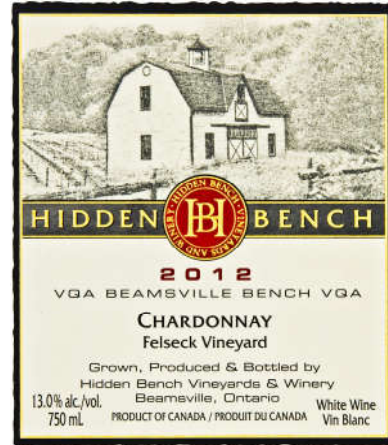
moving to avoid frost damage, an expensive insurance policy, but in our view, well worth the risk.The above average temperatures (+3C) continued throughout the Spring and Summer and although we had adequate precipitation early in the year, the very warm temperatures of July and August were also accompanied by little or no rainfall.

This lack of precipitation and lower than normal humidity resulted in less disease pressure, so our vineyard team was able to reduce the number of organic copper and sulphur sprays to avoid mildew in the vineyards, a bonus for a certified organic producer like HB.

Although the lack of precipitation was beneficial from a disease management point of view, it caused some drought stress to our younger vineyard blocks and resulted at the end of the season in a 20% reduced crop weight due to lower grape bunch weights.
As we do every season, we adapted our canopy management strategy to suit the particularities of the vintage and in addition to the very specific vertical shoot positioning, we left more than usual leaf coverage in the fruit zone to prevent sunburn on the grape clusters and to preserve delicate aromas of both red and white varietals.

Harvest started and ended about 10 days earlier than normal and the overall quality and health of the grapes across all varietals was exceptional with near perfect phenolic and sugar ripeness.
This resulted in wines with exceptional concentration and richness coupled with good structure and fruit focus. We look forward to following the evolution of this superior vintage over the next few years.