

Church Road 1 Single Vineyard Chardonnay 2021

WINEMAKERS
*Chris Scott
and Craig Thomas*

VITICULTURALIST
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**CHURCH
ROAD®**
HAWKE'S BAY

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"Terroir is a French word with no direct English translation. It can be described as the taste of the place. The same grape variety grown in different sites, even in the same region, will demonstrate uniquely different characteristics related to those individual sites. Differences in soil, slope, altitude, and shelter can subtly or dramatically alter the resulting wine, even over distances of a few metres. The very best sites, growing well suited varieties, will produce wines that stand out amongst their peers. Wines of recognisable personality, presence, and above all, quality. Church Road 1 is a range of single vineyard wines that showcase the terroir of our best vineyards."

Chris Scott, Chief Winemaker

THE VINEYARD

Terraces Vineyard, Tuki Tuki Valley:

Situated on an old river terrace on the western side of the Tuki Tuki River and approximately 8 km inland from the sea. The soils here are shallow clay loams over a calcareous clay pan, over an old gravel river bed. Only recently planted in Chardonnay, but showing great promise, this site has very similar soils to our iconic Tuki Tuki vineyard on the other side of the river. Both sites produce wines with a slate like mineral feel, but at Terraces, we are sheltered from the cold southerly by Te Mata Peak, giving the wines a richer, rounder, more textural structure, and a tendency towards peach like stone fruit flavours over zestier citrus notes.

VITICULTURE

2021 was an outstanding Hawke's Bay vintage. Exceptionally warm and dry, extended drought conditions persisted over the summer and through the entirety of the critical autumn harvest period, allowing all fruit to be harvested in perfect condition. By mid-February, the fruit was tasting unseasonably ripe despite sugar levels still being relatively modest and we made the call to begin our earliest ever Chardonnay harvest, to ensure we retained good freshness and acidity. This has resulted in wines of power, fragrance, line and drive. The vines were trained to two cane VSP. We employed extensive shoot and fruit thinning where required, along with bunch positioning, declumping, close canopy trimming and around 70% removal of leaf through the fruit zone, to ensure a balanced, evenly spaced and well exposed crop. Soil moisture was monitored regularly to regulate a deficit drip irrigation programme. Just enough water is provided to keep the vines in a functioning yet low vigour state that promotes optimal ripening and concentration. This wine is made entirely from a single block of Clone 548 Chardonnay.

WINEMAKING

This wine was a barrel selection of a single block of terraces vineyard Chardonnay, taken primarily from the first portion of the free run juice, representing a very low press yield of around 350 litres per ton. The juice from this early portion of the press cycle produces finely textured yet tightly structured wines with great longevity. Hand-harvested and hand sorted, the fruit was gently whole bunch pressed and then filled to French oak barriques without any clarification or additions. Wild primary and malolactic fermentation ensued, and has delivered an extra degree of complexity, and textural interest. 30% new oak was used to aid to further enhance the depth of the wine without dominating the fruit. The wine was matured on full yeast lees in barrel approximately 11 months with only occasional yeast lees stirring. To avoid any unnecessary stripping effect, the wine was unfinned and only lightly filtered for clarity prior to bottling.

THE WINE

A full bodied and powerful Chardonnay that still manages to retain good balance and liveliness. This complex wine is built around a core of ripe peach fruit lifted by fresher citrus elements and layered with complexities of roasted hazelnut, toasted brioche and struck flint. The palate is rich, yet finely textured with exceptional textural length and balanced, fresh acidity, finishing with a slate like minerality. Still youthful, with careful cellaring we expect this wine to continue to mature gracefully for 6 years or more from vintage date. With age, the wine will develop more complex, savoury nuttiness and will gain breadth and richness on the palate.

Alc 13.5% v/v | TA 7.2g/L | pH 3.11 | RS 2.5g/L

