

Tara Atacama Chardonnay Atacama Chile 2021

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Final Deductions

VINTAGE 2021

GRAPE Chardonnay

GEOGRAPHY Not Europe

COUNTRY Chile

LARGER REGION Atacama

SMALLER REGION Huasco

Rationale

Chardonnay can be excellent at absorbing– and reflecting– the terroir of where it’s grown. Originating from France’s Burgundy and Champagne regions, this grape is found throughout South America and, as elsewhere in the world, can produce a range of still and sparkling styles that range from the pedestrian to the sublime. Finding the right terroir while judiciously managing the use of oak (used for fermentation and aging) is key for this “queen” of white wines. Few grapes have witnessed as much improvement in South America as Chardonnay, as new, cooler-climate areas have been discovered and planted. Only a few years ago, Chile was most known for its abundance of correct, mainstream, but uninspiring Chardonnay– striking the two notes of ripe fruit and ample oak. However, as cooler spots have been identified, quality is improving.

Among these new cooler areas, many winemakers are keen on Limarí– approximately 625 feet above sea level, where clay-rich limestone soils give elegance, verve, and a kiss of salinity. Limarí Valley is one of the northernmost wine-growing regions in Chile, located 200 miles north of Santiago. Because of its proximity to the equator (not to mention the world’s driest desert, the Atacama), the Limarí Valley is hot and relatively dry. It is cooler and greener than the land on either side of it, thanks almost entirely to the narrow gap the Limarí River has created in the coastal hills.

Since its founding in 2001, Ventisquero has been located at the coastal end of Maipo, on the Trinidad estate. The loquacious and talented Felipe Tosso has been head winemaker of Ventisquero since day one. Tara is a 32-acre project in the far north of the country. Planted in the Atacama Desert, the vines experience windy and dry conditions with twice daily fog episodes, known as the camanchaca. Temperatures remain cool, not rising above 25 degrees and falling away at night. The principal challenge of this location is the amount of salt in the soil; the vineyard soil contains over 20 times the level of salt that vines are believed to be able to tolerate. This means that Ventisquero must irrigate the vines for 20-hour periods in order to remove the salt and allow the vines to absorb both moisture and nutrients– truly a labor of passion!

Sight

BRIGHTNESS Bright
CLARITY Hazy
COLOR DEPTH Medium
COLOR Yellow
HIGHLIGHTS None
BUBBLES No

Structure

RESIDUAL SUGAR Dry
ACID Med+
ALCOHOL Med+
PHENOLS None
TEXTURE Lean / Tart
FINISH Med+
COMPLEXITY Med+

Aroma & Taste

CITRUS FRUIT Lemon • Lime • Mandarin • Tangerine • Meyer Lemon
Condition: Fresh, Jammy / Candied, Ripe Part: Flesh, Peel / Zest

TREE/VINE FRUIT Apple (Green) • Pear (Green) • Pear (Asian) • Apple (Yellow) *Condition: Fresh, Ripe*

STONE FRUIT Apricot • Nectarine (White) • Nectarine (Yellow) *Condition: Under Ripe / Tart, Fresh, Ripe*

TROPICAL FRUIT Pineapple • Banana • Starfruit • Kiwi • Young Coconut
Condition: Under Ripe / Tart, Fresh, Ripe

FLORAL Apple Blossom • Honeysuckle • Magnolia • Jasmine • Lemon / Lime Blossom
Condition: Fresh, Dried

OTHER VEGETABLE Corn • Squash / Pumpkin • Mushrooms (White) • Ginger / Root

HERBAL Chive • Lemon Grass • Chamomile • Chervil • Verbena

OTHER SPICES Ginger Powder • Sesame / Candy

INORGANIC EARTH Mineral / Rock • Salinity / Seashell

OAK AGING No

OXIDATION/NUTTINESS Hazelnut • Almond / Marzipan • Macadamia • Cashew • Peanut / Shell

PERCEIVED WINEMAKING CHOICES Lees Contact • Malolactic (ML) • Skin Contact