

Crystallum,

`Clay Shales` Hemel-en-Aarde Chardonnay 2023

Walker Bay, Hemel-en Aarde, Cape South Coast, South Africa



Grape Varieties	100% Chardonnay
Winemaker	Peter-Allan Finlayson
Closure	Diam
ABV	13.5%
Residual Sugar	2.9g/L
Acidity	6.2g/L
Wine pH	2.39
Bottle Sizes	75cl
Notes	Vegetarian, Vegan

PRODUCER

This small winery was established in 2007 by brothers Peter-Allan and Andrew Finlayson. Their father, Peter, was a pioneer in the production of cool climate Chardonnay and Pinot Noir at Bouchard Finlayson, so after university it seemed the natural thing for the boys to return home and source some fruit from the Hemel-en-Aarde valley to start their own label. Crystallum is now one of the most highly regarded wineries in South Africa, yet the Finlaysons are determined to make even better wines. Peter-Allan has sourced fruit from some new vineyards, while winemaking has evolved. All of the wines are now fermented using indigenous yeasts and new oak has been reduced to help the bright fruit shine through.

VINEYARDS

This Chardonnay is grown in the 'Clay Shales' single vineyard, the name of which is derived from the soil composition here: predominately clay and shale. This combination allows for optimum fruit development while naturally restricting vigour. The vineyard sits at 300 metres above sea level in the mountains behind the town of Hermanus in the Walker Bay region. Altitude and cooling sea breezes slow down the grape ripening process, resulting in grapes with excellent concentration of flavour balanced by a vibrant acidity.

VINTAGE

The 2023 vintage was not without its challenges. A very dry and warm start to the season and early bud break, was followed by cooler and wet weather in mid-December, which prolonged ripening. There was some sporadic rainfall in February, but fortunately, this had less impact on earlier ripening varieties during harvest. The resulting wines are focused and precise but with a slightly riper profile than the preceding vintage.

VINIFICATION

Upon arrival at the winery, the grapes were gently pressed as whole clusters to obtain a very clear juice. The juice was left to settle in tanks and then racked into 500-litre French and Austrian oak barrels (25% of which were new), where the wine fermented naturally and remained on its lees for 10 months, gaining textural complexity. It was bottled by hand with no filtration or cold stabilisation to retain maximum intensity of flavour and character.

TASTING NOTES

This complex yet fresh Chardonnay displays white pear notes and banoffee pie's richness and depth. The palate is textured, showing notes of lemon peel, salted macadamia, and oatmeal. It is a generous expression of the single vineyard site with an impressive ability to age.