

Master Selection,
Akluj Chardonnay/Sauvignon Blanc 2023
Akluj, Mahārāshtra, India



Grape Varieties **90% Chardonnay**
10% Sauvignon Blanc

Winemaker **Giovanni Masi**

Closure **Screwcap**

ABV **12.5%**

Acidity **6.6g/L**

Wine pH **3.24**

Bottle Sizes **75cl**

PRODUCER

This is a joint venture between Piero Masi, a Tuscan winemaker we first came across in the mid-1980s when he worked for Paolo De Marchi at Isole e Olena, and late wine writer, producer and innovator Steven Spurrier, who founded the Wine Society of India on one of his frequent visits. They met through Kapil and Gaurav Sekhri, whose winery, Fratelli Vineyards, is based in Akluj (Mahārāshtra), on the right bank of the Nira River about 170 kilometres south of Pune.

VINEYARDS

First planted in 2008 with cuttings imported from Europe, the winery has around 95 hectares of vineyards over three sites in Akluj. This wine is produced from grapes harvested from the best vineyards in Motewadi and Garwad. The soils are generally poor with no clay which reduces vigour, a key factor in managing disease in what is a sub-tropical climate. Yields are half what is usually achieved in India, allowing full ripening before the monsoons arrive. Altitude also plays its part with vineyards up to 550 metres above sea level, resulting in cool nights, ensuring the grapes retain freshness.

VINTAGE

The 2023 vintage saw unusually cold temperatures for Indian standards during December and January. In February, temperatures increased and remained stable until the end of the growing season, favouring the gradual and optimal ripening of the grapes. Sun damage was efficiently avoided and there was less disease pressure thanks to the mild temperature which resulted in fresh and concentrated flavours in the grapes.

VINIFICATION

The varieties were destemmed and processed separately with both the Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc undergoing fermentation in stainless-steel tanks at 18°C-20°C for 10 to 15 days with no malolactic fermentation allowed. The cool temperature and stainless-steel tanks helped preserve the pristine fruit character. Following fermentation, the wine was blended, then aged in stainless-steel tanks prior to bottling.

TASTING NOTES

Pale yellow in appearance with youthful hints, this wine displays notes of white fruit with highlights of citrus. The Sauvignon provides a fresh, crisp, and aromatic base on which the Chardonnay builds body and ripe fruit aromas, such as pear and melon. The result is a medium-bodied wine with vibrant acidity and a long finish.