

Giant Steps Single Vineyard,
`Sexton Vineyard` Yarra Valley Chardonnay 2023
Yarra Valley, Victoria, Australia

GIANT STEPS
YARRA VALLEY



Grape Varieties	100% Chardonnay
Winemaker	Melanie Chester
Closure	Screwcap
ABV	13.5%
Wine pH	3.13
Notes	Vegetarian, Vegan

PRODUCER

Giant Steps was founded by Phil Sexton in 1997. With the help of winemaker Steve Flamsteed, Giant Steps forged a reputation as one of the Yarra Valley's most exciting producers, crafting cool climate Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from single sites. Since Mel Chester joined as Head of Winemaking and Viticulture in 2021, the winery has reached even greater heights, and was named 'Winery of the Year' in the 2025 Halliday Wine Companion. In the words of Campbell Mattinson, "it's been an outstanding winery for a long time, but the combination of energy and expertise – and no doubt plenty more besides – that winemaker Melanie Chester has brought since she arrived at the winery in November 2021 has frankly been breathtaking."

VINEYARDS

Located on the steep north-facing slopes of the Warramate Ranges at an elevation of 130 to 210 metres, the 30 hectare Sexton vineyard, which was planted in 1997, is exposed and demanding. Being on the higher slopes, the topsoil is thin and root systems have established themselves in shallow, gravelly loams above a tough, rocky, clay base. Vigour and bunch yields are naturally low in this environment resulting in intensely flavoured fruit with a high skin to juice ratio. The predominant clones are Gingin and Mendoza with clones 277, 96, 76 and 78 planted as well.

VINTAGE

The 2023 vintage saw cool and wet conditions throughout the entire growing season, delaying the commencement of this tough vintage. Spring was often wet in the Yarra Valley, with record volumes of rain from September until December. The frequent downpours elevated disease pressure but also made access to the vineyard an arduous task from waterlogged earth. Fortunately sun appeared in the critical weeks of flowering, allowing a healthy berry set and abundant pristine fruit. 2023 was one of the coolest and latest harvests on record, with the first pick starting two and a half weeks later than the previous average, but fortunately the grapes in 2023 had lovely fruit concentration with bright natural acidities.

VINIFICATION

The grapes were 100% hand harvested before undergoing a whole bunch press. The juice was transferred to barrel by gravity with no settling, taking on full gross lees. Wild fermentation took place in 500 litre French puncheons with a small amount of bâtonnage and 20% malolactic fermentation. Maturation lasted for 9 months in new (15%) and used French oak.

TASTING NOTES

This vineyard produces Giant Steps' most confident and open chardonnays due to its northern aspect and exposure combined with the clonal selection. This full-bodied Chardonnay opens with aromas of green apple, nectarine and almonds, with exotic yuzu fruit, ginger biscuit and preserved lemon. On the palate, it is precise and balanced, with an elevated savoury character. It is a wine of energy and drive, and finishes with lovely texture from the characteristic Gingin tannins and acidity.