

Giant Steps Single Vineyard,
`Sexton Vineyard` Yarra Valley Chardonnay 2024
Yarra Valley, Victoria, Australia

GIANT STEPS
YARRA VALLEY



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 2024 vintage was a more classic Yarra season. A cool start to Spring and ideal flowering conditions led to good fruit set and moderate yields. December was cool and mild, with significant rainfall at New Year and during the first week of January, giving the vines a good drink leading into the heat of February. Mid to late February was drier and warmer than usual in the Yarra, leading to great ripening conditions with no disease pressure and quite a fast vintage. In 2024, all of the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay was ready in quick succession, leading to a compressed harvest with the whole valley picked in the space of 3 weeks (where it normally spreads across 6 weeks). An exciting ride for the team, but ultimately producing wines with great flavour, bright acidity and balance.

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.