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Bouchard Finlayson Kaaimansgat Crocodiles Lair Chardonnay 2023

Flashes of lime blossom and flint, with a gravelly undercurrent of rye and yeasty complexity. Expansive pear and yellow peach flavours launch off the palate, endlessly gliding on honey infused lemon drops. Unctuous, yet lively throughout. A citrus pith interest anchors the finish, calling for a return to the glass.

The richness of the wine works very well with a mild tandoori salmon and coriander chutney. Leafy herb salad with a light drizzle of miso dressing. Classic avocado ritz.



variety : Chardonnay | 100% Chardonnay
winery : Bouchard Finlayson Boutique Vineyard
winemaker : Peter Finlayson
wine of origin : Elandskloof
analysis : **alc :** 12.39 % vol **rs :** 2.7 g/l **pH :** 3.32 **ta :** 5.8 g/l **va :** 0.34 g/l **so2 :** 75 mg/l
type : White **style :** Dry **body :** Medium **taste :** Fruity **wooded**
pack : Bottle **size :** 750ml **closure :** Cork

2025 Platter's Wine Guide - 5 Stars

ageing : Drink now through 2027.

The Kaaimansgat or Crocodile's Lair vineyard is hidden away in a beautiful valley, nestled amongst majestic mountains, just 80 km from Hermanus.

Bouchard Finlayson has been linked directly to this vineyard for more than thirty vintages. It is located 700m above sea level, ripens a month later than other Cape Chardonnays and benefits enormously from cool autumn temperatures. The name of the vineyard is steeped in mystery. According to local lore, escaped slaves from nearby Franschoek under the leadership of 'Kwaaiman', first settled here.

in the vineyard : Moderate and mild winter weather was experienced, with an average rainfall, which continued into spring and early summer. These conditions, ideal for slow and even ripening, was interrupted during the middle of December, with the arrival of some refreshing showers. January saw a continuation of dry and cool conditions, coinciding neatly with an earlier maturity of those cultivars that usually ripen first. During the third week of February, however, a massive 80mm downpour, had set the tone for the rest of the vintage. By the last day of picking, 240mm had fallen since harvest started. Rigorous selection of only ripe and healthy bunches, proved critical. Most vineyards cropped lower than the long-term average, mostly due to adverse flowering conditions.

about the harvest: The Crocodile's Lair crop from this vintage was remarkable – significant in size, but even more due to the perfect grape condition and ideal ripening, qualities falling outside the usual accepted norm.

in the cellar : A gradual shift to larger 350L oak barrels were effected, placing increased focus on fruit purity and reignin the wine's development in slightly. As per usual, no battonage, or lees stirring, is practiced although the wine remains on fermentation lees until the barrels are emptied and blended. The wine matured in French oak for 7 months, with a 21% new component. Bottling in January 2023.

Bouchard Finlayson Boutique Vineyard

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