

Le Bonheur Chardonnay 2001

Colour: Greenish medium-straw.

Bouquet: Wafts of ripe limy fruit immediately sets the mouth watering. There are also touches of apricot and peach with subtle overall oakiness – all the classic text-book Chardonnay aromas.

Taste: On the palate the emphasis is on the fruit which translates easily into a medium body that is ripe, creamy and fleshy, with gentle evidence of spicy oak-vanilla. Lovely rounded curves blend well with carefully balancing acidity for freshness and zest. The overall impression is of a poised and polished wine.

Serve with roast pork and crackling, veal cutlets braised in the same Chardonnay vintage with some tarragon, shellfish, fish baked in a creamy mushroom sauce, mussels marinara, stuffed chicken, an avocado mousse, and deep-fried calamari. Delicious when paired with a rich crab or shrimp salad, or on its own. Best enjoyed at about 12°C. Do not over-chill.

variety : Chardonnay | 100% Chardonnay

winery : Le Bonheur Estate

winemaker : Sakkie Kotzé

wine of origin : Stellenbosch

analysis : alc : 13.34 % vol rs : 2.1 g/l pH : 3.32 ta : 5.4 g/l

type : White **wooded**

pack : Bottle **closure :** Cork

ageing : The 2001 Chardonnay is drinking beautifully now, but has so much fruit and structure that it will develop even more complexity when matured for another year or three.

in the vineyard : 100% chardonnay from the vineyards which are situated at an altitude of 220 to 280 metres above sea level, facing both east-west and north-south. These are older vines, all grafted onto Richter 99 rootstocks: 80% were planted in 1983, while 20% were added in 1994.

The chardonnay vineyards are cultivated in sand, limestone and decomposed granite soils. Half of them are bush vines, while the rest are trellised onto a three-wire fence system. They were judiciously irrigated during the dry and hot growing season prior to the harvest in the middle of February, using an overhead sprinkler system. The yield was a low 5 tonnes per hectare.

about the harvest: After reaching an average Balling of 24 degrees, the grapes were hand-picked and brought to the Le Bonheur cellar in small baskets. No skin contact has been allowed after crushing.

in the cellar : Following yeast inoculation, 60% of the juice was fermented in stainless-steel tanks at 15 to 16 degrees Celsius, while the remaining 40% received a different treatment by fermenting the must in new French oak – in both Allier and Never barriques. Malolactic fermentation has been avoided. After 4 months of prolonged contact with its lees, the wine was lightly filtered, blended and bottled at the end of September 2001, and subsequently matured for about a year before its release.

