

FROM THE CELLAR... CHAPEL HILL

**YOU HAVE TO VISIT
OUR WINERY
BECAUSE...**

“You will arrive as a stranger, and leave as an old friend.” – Josh Kilvington, Cellar Door Manager, Chapel Hill



Chapel Hill Vineyard and 1865 Ironstone Chapel.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

November 13, 2018

Chapel Hill sits on the edge of a gorge at the north end of McLaren Vale. From the moment we turned into the estate, we experienced a sense of awe in reaction to the stunning views and, at the same time, a sense of serenity in response to the site, including the cellar door and the vineyard. The delectable combination set the tone for a highly memorable tasting.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Situated in an 1865 ironstone Chapel, originally part of Seaview Chapel and School House, the winery produced its first vintage in 1975. Today, the cellar door occupies the old Methodist chapel, which ironically did not serve wine during its services.

A respect for the land resonates throughout the estate, from the buildings themselves to the soul of the production, the vines. The magnificent location provides gorgeous views of the region (check out the spectacular panoramic view on their website, which shows the adjacent Onkaparinga Gorge).

In terms of production, Chapel Hill crushes 1,000 tonnes of grapes per year, the equivalent of 60,000 cases. In addition to grapes grown on the estate, fruit is sourced from several other vineyards McLaren Vale.

Chapel Hill produces wines from 10 different varietals, including the usual suspects one would expect to find, such as Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache, and Chardonnay, as well as some fantastic others, including Sangiovese, Vermentino, and Mourvèdre. Several blends rounded out the impressive lineup.



At any given time, several wines are open for tasting. As an upgrade, and for a nominal fee, one can indulge in the Icon Tasting. This offers the opportunity to sample the estate's flagship wines in combination with a thoughtfully prepared charcuterie and cheese plate.



Kyran Tyron, Cellar Door Professional, Chapel Hill

WINEMAKING PHILOSOPHY

Patience, purity, and balance embody the winemaking philosophy at Chapel Hill. The winemaking team, which includes Michael Fragos, Chief Winemaker and CEO, Bryn Richards, Winemaker, and Rachel Steer, Viticulturist, strives to produce the best possible wines from the best possible fruit using gentle, sustainable techniques.

ONE-ON-ONE WITH KYRAN TYRON, CELLAR DOOR PROFESSIONAL, AT CHAPEL HILL

We appreciated the warm hospitality, not only at the capable hands of Kyran Tyron, Cellar Door Professional, but with Josh Kilvington, Cellar Door Manager, and Bodhi Edwards, Retail and Marketing Manager. In fact, we lucked out when we got to spend some time with Josh and Bodhi the following day at another wine-related engagement.

Q: What do you like most about wine?

A: Everything that accompanies it. Occasion. Food. Generosity.

Q: Of all the wines Chapel Hill produces, which one is your favourite and why?

A: Gorge Block Chardonnay. The go-to Chapel Hill lunchtime wine for staff. Bringing the hoards back to Chardy! Not only loved by me, but loved by all.

Q: What's the best part of your job?

A: The people. I'm obsessed with the culture at Chapel Hill and how our team operates. We have this beautiful balance of working hard and having fun at the same time.

Q: What's the worst part of your job?

A: Boxing kangaroos in the House Block vineyard.

Q: What's your most embarrassing wine moment?

A: Losing a fight to a kangaroo in the House Block.

Q: Tell us one thing about you or your winery that nobody else knows.

A: Buried beneath the ground of our cellar door are the tanks from the original winery.

“The purity and balance expressed in our wines is inspired by a deep respect for our land and vines.” – Michael Fragos, Chapel Hill

THE TASTING...

In total, we tasted 9 wines with the passionate and friendly Kieran. We particularly appreciated how he allowed us time and space to enjoy each offering while simultaneously providing as much information/background as we desired.

Our adventure began with the 2018 Vermentino (price: \$20 AUD) and ended with the 2015 Fortified Shiraz (price: \$25 AUD).



A view from the Cellar Door at Chapel Hill

In between, we tasted the:

- 2017 Gorge Block Chardonnay (price: \$25 AUD)
- 2018 Sangiovese Rosé (price: \$18 AUD)
- 2017 Bush Vine Grenache (price: \$30 AUD)
- 2016 House Block Shiraz (price: \$65 AUD)
- 2016 Road Block Shiraz (price: \$65 AUD)
- 2016 Gorge Block Cabernet Sauvignon (price: \$65 AUD)
- 2016 The Vicar Shiraz (price: \$75 AUD)

Of note, the last four wines comprised our Icon Tasting Experience.

Our pick of the lot had to be the Vicar Shiraz, although we thoroughly enjoyed the bright acidity of the Sangiovese Rosé. The Vicar Shiraz, deep purple in colour, offered boysenberry, ripe blueberry, ripe blackberry, eucalyptus oil, grilled steak, Montreal steak spice, and leather in the nose. Full-bodied, with medium-high acidity and grippy, drying tannins, this 100% Shiraz served up tart blueberries, sour blackberries, graphite, wet stone, and earth on the palate, culminating in a long finish with enduring graphite and earthy notes.

It paired well with cured meats, which enhanced the spicy notes, especially black pepper. Although we left with a bottle, we plan to cellar it for at least 10 years, if not more, to allow it time to evolve and for the tannins to mellow out. As a bonus, the Vicar Shiraz comes in a beautiful box made specifically for that purpose. Classy, to say the least.

FINAL NOTES

We adored our time at Chapel Hill. Everything about the place, from the staff to the wine, exuded class. No wonder it has such a good reputation as a producer, which not only speaks volumes about the estate itself, but the entire McLaren Vale region.

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