



## TASTING AND TECHNICAL NOTES

CLOUDY BAY CHARDONNAY 2006, RELEASED FEBRUARY 2008

HARVEST BEGAN EARLIER THAN EVER BEFORE WITH AN IDYLIC SUMMER AND RELATIVELY LOW CROP LOADS DELIVERING RIPE FRUIT WITH INTENSE AROMATICS

### TASTING NOTES

The scent of white flowers and fresh citrus fruits - lemons, limes and grapefruit - all temptingly mingled with the savoury complexity of toasted nuts and oatmeal. The silky palate shows lively citrus flavours and seamlessly integrated spicy French oak. Cloudy Bay Chardonnay 2006 depicts the combination of natural yeast fermentation and vibrant Marlborough fruit in a wine that will age gracefully over the next five to seven years.

### VINEYARD

The grapes are predominantly the Mendoza clone sourced from Cloudy Bay Estate and grower vineyards located throughout the Wairau and Brancott Valleys. Soils vary from the silty gravels found in Rapaura, to the fine silty loams of Renwick, and the aged alluvial gravels of the Brancott Valley. Mendoza is a typically modest cropping chardonnay clone with a high incidence of small, currant-sized berries that have a high skin-to-juice ratio, hence it produces very concentrated flavours. The vineyards are planted at a density of 1,850 vines per hectare and most vines are trained to the vertical shoot position (VSP) trellis system. Low temperatures at flowering naturally resulted in a very low yielding year, with crops averaging 4.8T/ha.

### THE SEASON

The season got off to a relatively warm, frost-free start with budburst occurring almost three weeks earlier than normal. Ideal growing conditions prevailed throughout the spring, but with December came wet and windy weather. The unsettled conditions affected the flowering period, resulting in incomplete berry set and consequently low crop levels. The warmth returned early in the New Year and conditions during the remainder of the summer were idyllic. The combination of an early spring, low crops, and warm sunny weather brought on the ripening and - for the first time ever - harvesting commenced at the end of February. Fruit quality was superb and picking was hurried as all vineyards ripened rapidly, but two dumps of rain in late March slowed things down and put a cloud of apprehension over the vintage. Fine weather with low humidity followed the rain, leaving the fruit unscathed and picking resumed in earnest.

### HARVEST

The chardonnay harvest commenced on the 9th of April and finished on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April. The settled April weather allowed each block to fully ripen. Fruit composition averaged 23.5 Brix, pH 3.25 and titratable acidity 9.6g/l.

### VINIFICATION

The majority of the crop was hand-picked and loaded directly into tank presses to minimise fruit handling and enhance palate structure. The remainder of the fruit was machine-harvested into small bins and pressed in the same fashion. After settling, the majority of the juice was transferred directly to barrels and allowed to ferment using indigenous yeast strains before going through malolactic fermentation. The rest of the juice was transferred to stainless steel tanks and inoculated with a cultured yeast strain, before being transferred to barrel to complete fermentation. The individual components were blended after one full year in French oak barrels (a low proportion of which were new) and the wine remained on yeast lees for a further period prior to a light fining for clarification, then bottling in July 2007 (under screwcap). Final analysis shows an alcohol of 14.0v/v, pH 3.27 and acid of 6.7g/l.