

# DOG POINT

The name Dog Point dates from the earliest European settlement of Marlborough and the introduction of sheep (and sheep dogs) to the district.



## Chardonnay 2018 Marlborough, New Zealand

### ESTATE

Almost since its inception, Dog Point has been recognized as among the very top wine producers in New Zealand. Their two Sauvignon Blancs, their Pinot Noir and their Chardonnay are all wines of astounding quality and complexity – not just in the context of New Zealand wines, but globally. Their wines are hand-crafted from estate fruit grown on some of the oldest vines and best sites in Marlborough, some plantings dating back to the 1970s. In a region where 95% of grapes are harvested by machine, the winery's insistence on lower yields and hand-harvesting makes them truly stand out amongst the masses.

### WINE

James Healy and Ivan Sutherland will tell you that it's hard for them to grow much Chardonnay at the extremely high quality level they want for this wine. As with their Section 94 and Pinot Noir, the wine is distinctive due to extraordinary vineyard holdings, intense vineyard management geared towards low yields and hand-picked fruit, and long, low touch winemaking. The effect this work has on the Chardonnay, by nature the least expressive of these three grape varieties, is wild – the wine is intensely expressive, with loads of fruit, leesy character, and chalky minerality that is almost textural. As with all the wines they produce, it is considered a national standard bearer of a different shade.

### VINEYARD

*Soils:* Dog Point has Chardonnay planted in part on clay and silty valley floor vineyards, and in part on surrounding clay loam vineyards. As with all Dog Point wines, the picking is by hand (only 5% of New Zealand fruit is hand-picked).

*Farming:* Dog Point has farmed organically for over a decade and are now certified.

### WINEMAKING

*Harvest:* Hand picked and gently pressed straight to barrel (10% new) for eighteen months.

*Fermentation:* No juice clarification with 100% wild primary and secondary fermentation.

*Aging:* Bottled without fining and with only minimal filtration.

*Alcohol:* 13.0%

### VINTAGE

A mild spring free of frost alerts, resulted in an extremely good budburst with nice even growth across all varieties. Above average early/mid-summer temperatures with generally settled weather ensured an excellent flowering and fruit set, with January the warmest in over 60 years of statistical records. This led to an earliest harvest, however the month also produced another climatic record with by far the highest rainfall recorded for February, necessitating additional canopy management, under vine weeding and inter row mowing. Low cropping with good open canopies allowed sunlight and wind penetration to do their job, which certainly won the day in a testing, but rewarding vintage.

## Wine Spectator

93

"Rich and toasty upfront, with hazelnut, nutmeg and cardamom details that mingle with peach, poached pear and green apple flavors and a hint of gunpowder tea on a supple and juicy frame."

- M.W., 3/2021

94

James Suckling