

## KEEPERS OF THE FLAME

### 2023 Chardonnay

*Unlike the previous years Keepers of the Flame, this fruit was sourced from the Mistletoe block on our Hermitage Road Vineyard, which also utilises the 548 chardonnay clones that we used in previous vintages. This fruit was selected as it was looking exemplary throughout the growing season and shone beautifully at the time of harvest. Our latest evolution of the Keepers of the Flame style highlights the exceptional quality of not only the fruit, but also this iconic Hunter Valley vineyard.*

### TASTING NOTES

**COLOUR:** Pale straw with green hues.

**NOSE:** White peaches and struck matches balanced with a touch of toasted almond.

**PALATE:** Elegant acid with lemon drizzled over white peach, crushed roasted almonds and a long, lingering finish with lifted white rose petals and crunchy pink lady apples.

**VINEYARD:** Mistletoe block

**SOIL:** Grey clay loam

**OAK:** 100% new French oak, 2 x puncheons and 5 x barriques

### VINTAGE CONDITIONS

The 2022-23 growing season saw a continuation of La Nina conditions, with above average rainfall throughout Winter and into Spring. This saw significant flooding throughout the Hunter Valley and the very wet soils resulted in a delayed budburst, and this later timing followed through to flowering and veraison. Above average rainfall continued throughout Spring, but the arrival of Summer saw conditions improve with much needed dry and sunny weather.

Vintage started late in January, reminiscent of a traditional Hunter Vintage. Fruit quality was fantastic and we have some very exciting parcels of wine secured in the winery.

### WINEMAKING

This parcel was picked mid way through the harvest but was the last pick of our lower Hunter Valley fruit. Purely free run juice, drained into barrels, with a natural wild yeast ferment. The cooler vintage conditions meant that the fruit held its naturally higher acidity. Around two thirds of the barrels used in the final blend went naturally through malolactic fermentation, which gives this wine an added layer of texture on the nose and creaminess. The wine spent 10 months in new French oak barriques and puncheons.



### TECHNICAL DATA

**ALCOHOL:** 13%

**pH:** 3.20

**TA:** 6.8