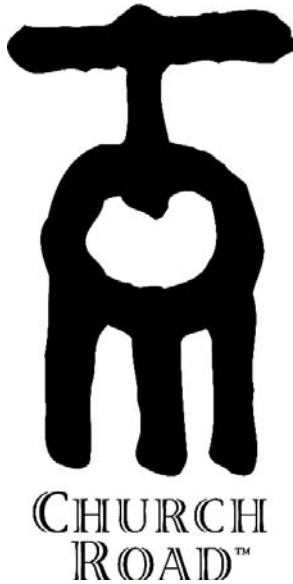


Church Road TOM Chardonnay released ten years after its iconic namesake

Ten years after the release of the iconic Bordeaux blend TOM, we're putting a new stake in the ground with the release of a white counterpart – Church Road TOM Chardonnay 2006. The wine is set to become a benchmark for serious New Zealand Burgundian whites just as the original TOM is for Bordeaux style reds.



The Bordeaux style of TOM was released at the Church Road Winery in 1999 – a wine from the 1995 vintage named after Tom McDonald, who, as winemaker at that same winery, forged the very first quality red wines in New Zealand back in the 1960s.

Now our winemakers have applied similar traditional principles to craft a white wine of the highest quality.

Not that this is a hasty development. The inaugural release of TOM Chardonnay 2006, is the culmination of 12 years of experimentation with traditional Burgundy winemaking techniques as well as innovative new practices.

"The results convinced us that the traditional approach was best," says Church Road winemaker Chris Scott. "By 2004, we had selected superior clones of Chardonnay for our vineyards and two years later we had firmly settled on the style of wine we wanted to make."

In a happy confluence of circumstance, 2006 just happened to be one of the best Chardonnay harvests ever in Hawke's Bay. TOM will only be produced in vintages of exceptional quality. Chardonnay from low-yielding vines on the Oamaru and Korokipo vineyards stood out as having exceptional concentration, coupled with the elegance of structure the winemakers were looking for.

Grapes for TOM Chardonnay 2006 were carefully hand selected and whole-bunch pressed at the winery. The must was filled to new and two-year-old French oak barriques, where it was allowed to ferment with wild yeast from the vineyard and winery. With wild yeast fermentation, different yeast strains can be active at the same time, imparting subtle complexity and improving the texture of the wine. Even malolactic fermentation starts spontaneously. These fermentations were allowed to run their course before the wine was matured for 14 months in the barrel. From these, only the best individual barrels were selected for the final blend – producing a modest 170 cases of superbly full-bodied, characterful and complex wine.

"TOM represents the pinnacle of our winemaking and Church Road TOM Chardonnay 2006 is without doubt the finest Chardonnay we've ever made at the Church Road Winery," says Chris.

Each bottle of Church Road TOM Chardonnay 2006 is individually numbered and hand finished. Like its red namesake, TOM Chardonnay is only available at the Church Road Winery and a few select fine wine retailers and restaurants. Retail price is in the order of \$70.00.

The sixth vintage of the TOM red wine, from the 2005 vintage, has just become available, at a recommended retail price of \$95.00.