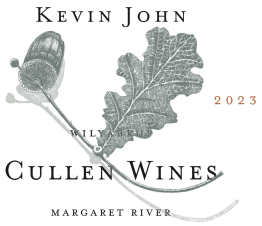

Cullen Wines

2023

'KEVIN JOHN'

Chardonnay | Margaret River - Australia

Stats

Grapes: 100% Chardonnay
Vineyard: Cullen Wines (Wilyabrup)
Vine Age: 40-years-old
Soil Type: Sandy/gravelly loam duplex
Viticulture: Certified biodynamic - certified organic - dry-farmed
Fermentation: Native — concrete egg, amphora, and puncheons (100% whole bunch basket pressed)
Skin Contact: 2 days in amphora
Aging: 8 months in puncheons (50% new)
Alcohol: 13.5%
pH: 3.25
Total Acidity: 6 g/L
Total SO2: 86 ppm
Total Production: 955 cases

Reviews

Wine Advocate | 98 points
James Suckling | 97 points

About

'Kevin John' Chardonnay is Cullen's flagship white, named after Dr. Kevin John Cullen, co-founder of Cullen Wines. It is made from Wente clone vines planted on their own roots in 1976 on the Cullen's certified organic and biodynamic Wilyabrup estate. This wine has always been a benchmark for Australian Chardonnay–not just Margaret River Chardonnay. Vintage 2023 was a low yielding vintage which resulted in some stunning grapes and hence quality wine. The growing conditions until December were cold and wet, and due to the negative Indian dipole and La Nin a effects finishing in December 2022, there was an unprecedented dry spell from December until the end of harvest that led to incredibly small berries full of flavor.

The fruit was harvested across three weeks according to the biodynamic calendar in late February, capturing fruit and flower days, a full Moon, and a Moon opposite Saturn astral event. Back at the winery, the grapes soaked with the juice for two days in amphora, before being whole bunch basket pressed into a mix of concrete egg, amphora, and biodynamic puncheons. All the wine then aged in puncheons for 8 months, of which 50% was new, before being blended in tank. It was bottled with just sulfur. No fining or filtering.

Tasting Notes

Bright golden straw in color. Aromas open with white blossoms, chamomile, vanilla, and almond, followed by ripe pear. The palate is precise and lightly phenolic, unfolding layers of stone fruit, quince, and Bosc pear.