

Hamilton Russell

A precise, estate-grown Chardonnay from one of South Africa's benchmark producers, the 2025 vintage combines bright acidity, deep fruit and elegant restraint.

HAMILTON RUSSELL VINEYARDS



Chardonnay 2025

Walker Bay, South Africa

Region and Vineyards

Hamilton Russell Vineyards is based in Hemel-en-Aarde Valley, just behind Hermanus in South Africa's Cape of Good Hope, where the cold South Atlantic brings a pronounced maritime influence. The estate is recognised as a pioneering 170-hectare property in the valley, with Chardonnay and Pinot noir planted on 52 hectares of ancient, stony, clay and iron-rich shale-derived soils.

For Chardonnay 2025, the estate reports **low-vigour, stony, clay-rich, iron-rich, shale-derived soil**, a naturally moderating foundation for a wine built on tension rather than weight. The season followed the challenges of 2024 with even budbreak, healthy canopies, no meaningful disease pressure and a compressed harvest ending on 19 February. The estate describes 2025 as one of the best of its 45 vintages to date.

Winemaking

Hamilton Russell Chardonnay 2025 is 100% Chardonnay, grown, made, matured, bottled and labelled on the Hamilton Russell Vineyards estate. Fermentation took place in 300-litre French oak barrels, with 100% François Frères tight-grain oak and the estate's own Hamilton Russell Vineyards toast, preserving the wine's mineral line while adding discreet texture.

The wine was aged for **9 months in French oak**, with 24% first-fill barrels, 20% second -fill, 24% third-fill and 32% older oak. Its technical balance is notably precise: 13.60% alcohol, 6.30 g/l acidity, pH 3.38 and 2.60 g/l residual sugar. Yield was very low at 2.24 tons/ha, or 13.8 hl/ha, with production limited to 3,902 cases of 12 bottles equivalent. Release is scheduled for March 2026.

Alcohol :12,90 %

Composition: 100% Chardonnay

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Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Bright pale lemon with a subtle golden glint, suggesting freshness, concentration and finely integrated barrel maturation.
- **Aroma**: Focused pear, lime zest and green apple lead the nose, followed by white peach, lemon curd, wet stone, delicate nuttiness, faint toast and a restrained floral lift.
- **Palate**: Dry, elegant and intensely mineral, with bright natural acidity drawing pear, lime and citrus peel into a long, savoury finish. The texture is polished and gently creamy, yet the wine remains taut, precise and beautifully controlled.

Did you know?

Hamilton Russell Vineyards was founded in 1975 by Tim Hamilton Russell, who chose the then undeveloped site for its cool-climate potential. Today, the estate is led by Anthony Hamilton Russell and remains focused on **a single Chardonnay and a single Pinot noir**, both intended to express the estate's clay-rich, maritime-influenced terroir.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Roast chicken with lemon and tarragon**: The wine's citrus line and savoury oak detail complement the golden skin, herbs and gentle richness of the dish.
- **Grilled lobster with beurre blanc**: Its bright acidity cuts through the butter sauce while pear, lime and mineral notes lift the sweetness of the shellfish.
- **Seared scallops with cauliflower purée**: The creamy texture of the purée echoes the wine's polished mouthfeel, while the mineral finish sharpens the scallops.
- **Comté or aged Gruyère**: Nutty, savoury cheese draws out the Chardonnay's subtle toast, lees-like complexity and long saline finish.

94

Robert Parker (RP) : 94 Points (2024)

The Hamilton Russell Vineyards 2024 Hemel-en-Aarde Valley Chardonnay shows a pretty combination of orchard fruit and subtle tropical notes underscored by a clear line of salinity that carries through an energetic, mid-weight texture. The wine is 100% barrel-aged in a mix of new and neutral François Frères oak, a regimen that adds quiet structure without obscuring detail. Sourced from low-yielding vines rooted in Bokkeveld shale, the maritime influence of the nearby South Atlantic contributes a taut mineral edge and natural freshness to the finish. A total of 35,340 bottles were produced.

94 Tim Atkin

Tim Atkin (TA) : 94 Points (2024)

Yields were very low on the 2024 Hamilton Russell Chardonnay, producing an unusually concentrated wine. Benefitting from the contribution of four different clones, it's a rich, still youthful white with spice, vanilla-scented 28% new oak, flavours of tangerine, peach and citrus zest and top notes of honeysuckle and saffron.

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Decanter (DCT) : 93 Points (2024)

Subtle, fragrant, a delicate Chardonnay with lots of finesse on show. Tree-fruit characters, allied with crisp lemon/lime acidity, pronounced mineral notes on the long finish. This will need more time to fully meld but all the structure is undoubtedly there - just needs a bit of time for the flesh to cover the bones.

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