



# Crystallum

Sourced from a single vineyard in Hemel-en-Aarde, Crystallum Clay Shales Chardonnay showcases a unique expression of its terroir, with layers of complexity and freshness, backed by subtle oak influence.

## Clay Shales Chardonnay 2023

Walker Bay, South Africa

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### Region and Vineyards

The **Clay Shales Chardonnay** is produced from a single vineyard located in the **Hemel-en-Aarde** region, nestled in the mountains behind the town of Hermanus in **Walker Bay**, South Africa. The vineyard, sitting at **300 meters above sea level**, benefits from the cooling breezes of the Atlantic Ocean, which help slow the ripening process. This results in grapes with **concentrated flavors** and **vibrant acidity**, essential for producing high-quality Chardonnay.

The vineyard's name, **Clay Shales**, is derived from its unique soil composition of **clay and shale**, which naturally restricts vine vigor, leading to low yields but highly concentrated fruit. This terroir, combined with the **altitude** and **moderate climate**, allows the Chardonnay grapes to develop rich, complex flavors while retaining fresh acidity, making this wine a true reflection of its environment.

### Winemaking

The **Clay Shales Chardonnay** was crafted using gentle and traditional winemaking techniques to preserve the purity and intensity of the fruit. The grapes were **hand-harvested** and gently **pressed as whole clusters**, ensuring minimal oxidation and extracting clear juice. After a brief settling period, the juice was transferred to **500-litre French and Austrian oak barrels** (25% new), where fermentation occurred naturally with indigenous yeasts.

The wine was aged **on its lees for 10 months**, gaining **textural complexity** and depth. No filtration or cold stabilization was used before bottling, allowing the wine to retain its full character and intensity. This careful winemaking approach results in a Chardonnay that is both elegant and expressive, with a balance between fruit and oak that enhances its ability to age.



Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 100% Chardonnay



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## Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Pale gold with a bright clarity.
- **Aroma:** Expressive notes of **white pear** and **banoffee pie** offer a rich and inviting bouquet, with subtle hints of toast and vanilla from the oak aging.
- **Palate:** The wine is richly textured, with flavors of **lemon peel**, **salted macadamia**, and **oatmeal**. The acidity is vibrant, providing freshness to the generous palate, with a long, lingering finish.

## Did you know?

The **Clay Shales** vineyard, with its unique combination of **clay and shale soils**, naturally limits the vigor of the vines, ensuring that the Chardonnay grapes are concentrated in flavor and able to express the nuances of their terroir. This single-vineyard wine is a testament to the Finlaysons' dedication to producing terroir-driven wines that reflect the characteristics of their environment.

## Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Grilled lobster with lemon butter:** The richness of the lobster is complemented by the wine's texture and vibrant acidity, while the lemon butter echoes the citrus notes in the wine.
- **Butternut squash risotto:** The creamy texture of the risotto is a perfect match for the wine's lees-aged complexity, with the wine's acidity cutting through the richness.
- **Roast chicken with herbs and garlic:** The savory herbs and succulent chicken pair beautifully with the Chardonnay's depth and subtle oak notes.
- **Goat cheese tart:** The tangy creaminess of the goat cheese is balanced by the wine's fresh acidity and rich fruit profile.

### Robert Parker (RP) : 92 Points (2022)



*Instantly impressive in the glass, the 2022 Clay Shales Chardonnay opens with classic Chardonnay aromas of yellow apple and Meyer lemon that burst with a bright, floral essence and hints of wax melon. Medium-bodied and with 13.5% alcohol, the mouthfeel has a delicate mineral tension with succulent acidity. Lingering flavors of lemon pastry cream persist over the long, spicy finish. It's a fantastic Chardonnay that spent 10 months in all French oak, 20% new. Only 4,680 bottles were produced. Chardonnay lovers should seek out this beautiful bottling.*

### Tim Atkin (TA) : 96 Points (2019)



*As its name suggests, this superb Chardonnay comes from a vineyard that is rich in clay, making it a very good bet in drier vintages. Produced from just 0.5 hectares on the Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge, it's bright, salty, leesy and judiciously oaked, with the kind of precision and palate length that wouldn't look out of place in Puligny-Montrachet. Drink 2021-26.*



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**Vinous (Antonio Galloni) (VN) : 93 Points (2019)**

*The 2019 Clay Shales was whole-bunch-pressed and matured for 10 months in foudre and 500-liter barrels. It has a clean, precise bouquet revealing traces of red apples and a hint of quince. The palate is well balanced with more weight and density than The Agnes, a lovely saline note emerging toward the finish. Grippy and pithy, displaying superb persistency and poise Drink 2022-35.*



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