



Vasse Felix

Vasse Felix Heytesbury Chardonnay 2023 is a compelling expression of modern Australian Chardonnay: refined yet powerful, textural yet vibrant, with the kind of complexity that rewards both immediate pleasure and patient cellaring.



VASSE FELIX



Heytesbury Chardonnay 2023

Margaret River, Australia

Region and Vineyards

Margaret River, in Western Australia, is one of the world's great homes for Chardonnay, shaped by a **Mediterranean climate** with profound maritime influence from the Indian and Southern oceans. The region's ancient, well-draining soils and regular sea breezes help preserve freshness, while the long ripening season encourages flavour concentration without sacrificing line or finesse. Chardonnay has an especially natural affinity here, often showing citrus precision, mineral tension and a distinctive coastal savouriness.

For Heytesbury 2023, Vasse Felix selects its most distinctive small vineyard sections across Margaret River, focusing on the interplay of clone, aspect and soil. The wine is made from **100% Gingin clone** Chardonnay, a low-yielding selection that is central to the identity of the region's finest examples, prized for intensity, structure and longevity. The result is not simply regional typicity, but a more exacting, site-led expression of Margaret River Chardonnay at its most nuanced and ageworthy.

Winemaking

Heytesbury Chardonnay 2023 is made with an uncompromising, texture-building approach. The fruit was **hand harvested** between 15 February and 7 March 2023, then whole-bunch pressed, with the juice taken through **wild fermentation** at full solids. This method encourages the savoury complexity and layered palate shape that have become hallmarks of the cuvée. Vasse Felix has long positioned Heytesbury as its most characterful Chardonnay, built as much on site expression as on meticulous élevage.

Maturation took place in **French oak barriques**, with **52% new oak**, for **9 months**. The wine is 13% alcohol and remains firmly dry in style. The producer also notes that Heytesbury is slow to emerge, a wine intended to unfold gradually in bottle rather than merely impress in youth. That measured oak regime, combined with the phenolic authority of Gingin clone fruit, gives the 2023 a fine balance of creaminess, tension and cellar-worthy structure.

Alcohol :13,00 %

Composition: 100% Chardonnay



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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Pale yellow with green highlights, bright and youthful in the glass, signalling both concentration and freshness.
- **Aroma:** Intensely complex and savoury, with lemon curd, grapefruit rind, lime leaf and citrus blossom layered over stone flint, wet limestone, champignon, ocean spray, sweet straw and discreet toasted oak.
- **Palate:** Medium- to full-bodied, textural and composed, with a fleshy yet tightly drawn core. Grapefruit, clotted cream, mandarin pith, pineapple and biscuit notes are carried by vivid acidity, saline detail and a fine, dry phenolic tension that drives a long, polished finish.

Did you know?

Heytesbury occupies a special place in Australian Chardonnay history. Vasse Felix notes that the 2010 vintage became the most awarded wine in Australian history after winning eleven trophies in national wine shows, underlining just how important this cuvée has been in defining modern Margaret River Chardonnay.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Roast chicken with morels and cream:** The wine's savoury mushroom, citrus and cream notes echo the dish beautifully, while its acidity keeps the richness in check.
- **Lobster with browned butter and lemon:** Sweet shellfish highlights the wine's fleshy fruit core, and the saline, flinty edge gives the pairing extra precision.
- **Pork loin with apple and sage:** The wine's texture and subtle spice suit the succulence of pork, while its fresh citrus line lifts the herbal accents.
- **Comté or aged Gruyère:** Nutty, savoury cheeses work especially well with Heytesbury's oak polish, phenolic grip and lingering mineral finish.



James Halliday (JH) : 99 Points (2023)

2026 White Wine of the Year, Chardonnay of the Year. Score awarded by the Halliday tasting panel at the annual Awards judging. JF writes: When it comes to the best of the best, provenance is paramount. And taste memory utmost, especially when tasting Heytesbury made under Virginia Willcock's tutelage (in '26 she clocks up 20 years as chief winemaker at Vasse Felix, during which time she has transformed chardonnay in the region and beyond). Her influence is here in this wine, and '23 will be known as one of the finest. It's hard to explain because it's still very tightly wound, yet it has depth and volume. Oscillating between power and refinement, intensity and pure drinking pleasure. Grapefruit, Meyer lemon, a crushed oyster shell note, flinty, moreish sulphides, texture, mouth-watering, pure acidity and so much more besides. Nothing else to say other than that this is outstanding.



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Robert Parker (RP) : 97 Points (2023)

The 2023 Heytesbury Chardonnay reveals all the poise and balance we expect from the season. It is awesome. This feels totally weighted on the back palate. The fruit intensity, coupled with powerful acidity and phenolic presence, fully penetrates beyond mere "flavor experience" and dives deep into the senses; the only option left is to ride that wave until it slowly fades. It's a persistent, sophisticated wine of latent power and patience. While this is released two years from harvest, it doesn't start to show its complex potential until around five years from harvest and far beyond that. It's slow to emerge and slow to age. This is a 100% Gingin clone Chardonnay, matured in French oak barriques, 52% new, for nine months, with seven months blended in tank prior to bottling. Rating: 97+



James Suckling (JS) : 97 Points (2023)

An intensely complex and inviting nose with aromas of lemon curd, grapefruit rind, orange blossoms and gunsmoke. The medium-bodied palate has a textural mouthfeel and vivid acidity, showing notes of lime zest, mandarin pith, fresh pineapple and cookies. Multidimensional and giving with an underlying tension. Exceptional. Drink or hold.



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