

MÉTHODE RANGE

# MÉTHODE OAKRE

2022

VARIETY: CHARDONNAY

REGION: COONAWARRA

The exploration of oak use in Chardonnay:  
One new, one old and something bold

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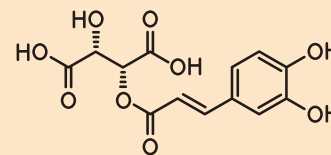


Figure 1. Caftaric acid molecule

## ABSTRACT:

A trial to explore the influence of different types and ages of oak barrels on the resultant wine. The grapes were harvested and quickly pressed into 3 types of oak for fermentation; One new 300L French Hogshead 300L, one old 500L Puncheon and one 225L barrique previously used for Cabernet Sauvignon. The resultant wine is complex, combining biscuit and melon fruit with a hint of 'Ochre' colour and tannin complexity.

## INTRODUCTION:

2022 was a strong vintage, with stable conditions and harvest starting a little later than recent years. The crop levels were moderate, with a slight frost in November reducing the white varieties significantly from previous years. The resultant wines are concentrated and intense with great fruit flavours.

## METHOD:

The Chardonnay grapes were harvested and pressed quickly into 3 types of oak for fermentation; One new 300L French Hogshead, one old 500L Puncheon and one 225L barrique previously used for Cabernet Sauvignon. The juice was allowed to warm and spontaneously ferment with natural yeast. Malolactic fermentation was allowed to complete in all three barrels, before being racked and topped for storage for 12 months. It was stirred monthly to allow some less contact to build complexity on the mid-palate. The wines were then racked, filtered and blended together, combining the 3 types of oak before being bottled, unfined.

## DISCUSSION:

The use of oak in Chardonnay is well documented to add complexity and buttery, spice and length to the palate. In this trial, fermenting the wines in different oak with the same fermentation parameters allowed a true expression of what the oak is adding to the wine. The use of an ex-Cabernet red wine barrel however, is not generally done and therefore imparts an element not normally seen in Chardonnay wines. The tannin left over from the Cabernet transfers to the Chardonnay adding a hint of ochre colour to the wine and some diverse textural elements. The new French barrel integrates traditional woody notes and a savoury biscuit element whilst adding length to the palate. The older Puncheon preserves the fruit expression of Chardonnay and adds creamy mid-palate to the wine. Once combined, these three wines form a balanced and elegant wine that has both fruit expression and a textural and intriguing difference. The molecule embossed on the front label is Caftaric Acid (figure 1.) This naturally occurring phenolic compound (tannin) contributes to the colour in white wine. In this case the ochre influence of colour is from the Caftaric Acid present in the red wine barrel.

## CONCLUSION:

A savoury style of Chardonnay combines biscuit and melon fruits, with a subtle oak influence. The palate is complex with the new oak adding toastiness, the old oak extending the mid-palate and the red wine barrel adding a hint of 'ochre' colour and tannin complexity. An overall balanced and elegant wine that is textural and intriguing.



PATRICK OF  
COONAWARRA

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