



2008 Chardonnay

Vintage Summary

The 2008 growing season began with an early bud break (early March) due to the extremely warm spring temperatures. Fluctuating temperatures included heat spikes, wind, and an unusual spring frost that plagued the Paso Robles area. A cool start to summer segued into consistent warm temperatures. The early bud break, combined with lowered yields from frost and a warm finish to summer created an early harvest for our Chardonnay. The first vineyard block (9 year old vines) was harvested August 28th. The second block (20 year old vines) was harvested September 9th

Vineyard Practices

The 2008 Chardonnay was sourced from a vineyard on the west side of Paso Robles. The blocks differ in age by 11 years. Located in the cool, ocean influenced Templeton gap, the soils are rich in limestone. These unique soils help maintain acidity and allow picking dates to be determined on flavors. Aggressive pruning helps focus the plants stored carbohydrates on promoting strong early growth in shoots. When shoots reach around 6 to 8 inches, we remove any growth not intentionally left at pruning. The intense canopy of the Chardonnay allowed us to be very precise with the amount of sunlight intentionally left to penetrate the clusters. Skilled crews hand pulled leaves and laterals to allow fractional light into the canopy. At veraison, any clusters with green or pea size berries were removed to retain even maturity throughout the vineyard. One week before harvest, a skilled crew was sent through the block to remove any bad clusters to ensure sound fruit and even ripening.

Winemaking Practices

Our winemaking team began sampling the ripening grapes on a regular basis at the end of July. During the last few weeks before the grapes were picked, we tasted the skins, juice and seeds two to three times per week. We evaluated flavor, sugar, pH and Total Acidity to determine the exact harvest date.

A skilled crew handpicked the grapes into ½ ton picking bins. All our Chardonnay is whole cluster pressed with the heavier press fractioned off into a separate tank. We inoculated the Chardonnay with M2 yeast, a strain used for its inherent citrus characteristics. After inoculation, the juice was barreled down into 100% French oak (26% new) for barrel fermentation. Fermentations were temperature-controlled at 55 degrees Fahrenheit. After fermentation ceased, the wine was aged “sur lies” in barrel, and stirred weekly during its 8 month ageing process. To retain its acidity and citrus characteristic, the wine did not undergo malolactic fermentation. The final blend was put together on March 1st and bottled March 24th.

Tasting Notes

Aromas of pear, apricot and ripe stone fruit combine with a hint of caramel and toasted oak on the nose of this wine. The entry is bright and crisp with good acid and flavors of white peach, banana, meyer lemon and hints of mineral and toasted almonds. The wine finishes by coating your mouth with multiple layers of honey, cream, and a touch of spice from the “lees” stirred French oak.

Technical Information

Barrel aging: 8 months in 225-L oak barrels, 26% new
Blended: 3/1/ 2008
Barrel replacement: 20-30% annually on average
Brix at Harvest: 24.2
Harvest method: 100% hand-harvested
Bottled: March 24, 2009
Alcohol: 14.5%
Malolactic fermentation: None
Suggested Retail Price \$19.75

Racking: None
Fining: None
pH: 3.37
Filtering: Sterile
Fermentation: 12 days with M2
Total Acidity: .79g/100ml
Barrels: Allier, Nevers
Yeasts: M2