



2006 Chardonnay

Vintage Summary

2006 began with consistent rain and cool weather for the first 4 months of the year. The vines, tired from the heavy 2005 harvest, awakened in early May with unusual warm weather for late spring. May, June and July averaged a high of 78 degrees, allowing the vines to develop strong canopies in a relatively short time frame. August and September lingered in the 85-degree range, helping achieve bright, ripe fruit character without picking based on concerns of too much sugar or loss of acidity. We harvested our Chardonnay in mid to late September.

Vineyard Practices

The 2006 Chardonnay was sourced from two vineyards on the west side of Paso Robles. Both vineyards are located in the cool, ocean influenced Templeton gap, and have soils 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 (23% 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 in March and bottled in early April.

Tasting Notes

Aromas of green apple, pineapple and ripe stone fruit combine with a hint of cinnamon and toasted oak on the nose of this wine. The entry is bright and crisp with good acid and flavors of apricot, lemon and hints of mineral and wet stone. The wine finishes with multiple layers of honey, cream, vanilla and a touch of caramel from the “lees” stirred French oak.

Specifics

Barrel aging:	8 months in 225-L oak barrels, 23% new	Barrel replacement:	20-30% annually on average
Blended:	3/25/2007	Racking:	None
Harvest dates:	9/23/2006	Fining:	None
Brix at Harvest:	24.0	Filtering:	Sterile
Harvest method:	100% hand-harvested	Bottled:	April 10, 2007
Fermentation:	12 days with M2	Alcohol:	13.5%
pH:	3.45	Barrels:	Allier, Nevers
Total Acidity:	.79g/100ml	Malolactic fermentation:	None
Yeasts:	M2		

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