



2009 Chardonnay

Vintage Summary

The 2009 growing season began with an early bud break (early March) due to the extremely warm spring temperatures. An early April frost rolled into the Paso Robles area, but our vineyards were unaffected due to their hillside stature. A warm consistent summer segued into moderate early Fall. The balanced weather allowed us to pick on flavor profiles without any concerns of excessive heat or cooler temperatures. The first vineyard block (9 year old vines) was harvested September 3rd. The second block (20 year old vines) was harvested September 10th

Vineyard Practices

The 2009 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 to promote 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 apple, apricot and ripe stone fruit combine with a hint of honey 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 cinnamon, cream, and a touch of spice from the “lees” stirred French oak.

Specifics

Barrel aging: 8 months in 225-L oak barrels, 26% new
Blended: 3/1/ 2010
Harvest dates: 9/3 & 9/10, 2009
Brix at Harvest: 23.9
Harvest method: 100% hand-harvested
Fermentation: 12 days with M2
Total Acidity: .79g/100ml
Malolactic fermentation: None
Suggested Retail Price \$21.25

Barrel replacement: 20-30% annually on average
Racking: None
Fining: None
Filtering: Sterile
Bottled: March 24, 2010
pH: 3.34
Alcohol: 13.5%
Barrels: Allier, Nevers
Yeasts: M2