

2018 Chardonnay

Tasting Notes:

Caramel, honey, and butterscotch are coupled with brown butter pears and bananas on the nose. There are subtle aromas of pecans, almonds, and amaretto. Light to medium bodied. A creamy mid palate weight coats the mouth without being overly viscous, leading to a supple finish.

About The Vineyard:

Our Chardonnay was grown in the San Lucas American Viticultural Area (AVA) at the southernmost point of Monterey County. Freedom rootstock, known for its preference for well-drained earth, was planted on Metz complex sandy loam soils. Clone 4, sometimes referred to as the workhorse, is consistent in producing exceptional quality wines at good yields.

Growing Season:

For the first time since 2012, growers experienced a return to California's normally cool, coastal climate and a long, drawn-out harvest season. Mild, cool temperatures in winter and spring extended the period for bloom and fruit set, leading to sleepless nights for growers ready to protect vines from any frost. Despite this worry, there were no issues with fruit set. Because of the coolness, many predicted a light crop in early summer, but as the hang time extended, they changed their assessments to an average-sized crop. Quality for Chardonnay was exceptional, with solid acid levels and great phenolic development. Vintners were thrilled with a high-quality year.

Winemaking:

After a gentle squeeze in the membrane press, I cold settled the collected juice for four days and then clean racked the clarified volume into barrels. I used a *Saccharomyces Bayanus* strain of yeast for fermentation because I like the resulting aromatics that it produces. Once inoculated, fermentation proceeded nicely for 20 days until completion, at which point I topped each barrel. During the next 15 months, I aged this Chardonnay on the lees while stirring every two to three weeks. This helped to intensify creamy characteristics. Malolactic fermentation was not encouraged but not inhibited. I wanted to leave some malic acid in the wine for crispness. After barrel aging, just prior to bottling, a small percentage of Muscat Canelli was blended in to enhance aromatics.

Technical Info:

- Alcohol % - 13.3
- Production – 10 barrels produced
- Aging – Barrel aged for 15 months on the lees. 30% new American oak barrels – medium toast. 70% neutral oak barrels