

2009 Chardonnay Reserve Carneros, Napa Valley

Vineyards

Our 2009 Reserve Chardonnay was produced entirely from grapes grown in the cool-climate Carneros district of southern Napa Valley, with 85% of the fruit coming from our estate vineyards which includes 70% from four special blocks of our Foster Road ranch. These sites provide us with six distinctive, high-quality French Dijon clones of Chardonnay, which we blend to create a singularly delicious wine with complex varietal aromas and intense, vibrant flavors.

Vintage 2009

In 2009, plentiful spring rains in Northern California deferred the need for early irrigation, resulting in small berries with deeply concentrated flavors. Summer was consistently cool, which allowed for slow, steady ripening and the parallel development of grape sugars and flavors, fostering maturity at moderate sugar levels and resulting in superbly balanced wines. We harvested the grapes for our 2009 Chardonnay between September 8th and 19th with a fine balance of ripe fruit flavors and crisp balancing acidity.

Winemaking

We night-harvest 100% of our Chardonnay grapes and whole-cluster-press the fruit to obtain the freshest, purest juice possible. In 2009, we inoculated 91% of the juice with cultured yeast strains to accentuate fruit character while using 9% native yeasts from the vineyard to foster greater complexity and a refreshing minerality. One hundred percent of the juice fermented in French oak barrels, 31% new, with 12% undergoing a secondary, malolactic fermentation to enhance richness and mouthfeel. Aging our Reserve Chardonnay in barrel on its primary yeast lees for 15 months, with weekly stirring to enhance body and complexity, further refined its round, creamy texture, varietally expressive aromas and lush, concentrated flavors.

Tasting Notes

Our 2009 Napa Valley Reserve Chardonnay delights the olfactory sense with beautifully ripe golden apple, citrus and tropical fruit aromas, complemented by seductive scents of buttercream, yeast and mineral. On the palate, the wine is wonderfully lush and mouthfilling, with rich, creamy, spiced apple, peach and melon flavors; yet, it is also wonderfully fresh, focused and balanced, reflecting the cool 2009 vintage. With deeply concentrated fruit and vibrant acidity, this luxurious Napa Valley Chardonnay will age beautifully in bottle for another 5-7 years.

Grape variety: 100% Chardonnay

Vineyards: 100% Carneros, Napa Valley

Harvest dates: September 8-19, 2009

Fermentation: 100% in French oak barrels

Barrel aging: 15 months *sur lie* in French oak barrels, 31% new, with weekly stirring of the lees

Alcohol: 14.2%

Total acidity: 0.63 g/100 ml

pH: 3.47

Bottled: January, 2011

Winemaker: Julianne Laks