

CARLSON



2016 Chardonnay

In 2016 I made a decision to source my Chardonnay fruit from a slightly cooler vineyard located in the Santa Maria Valley area. The vineyard is White Hills Vineyard. It is located just south of Santa Maria and is a very cool site which is heavily influenced by the maritime weather of the Pacific Ocean. This site is capable of producing fruit that has amazingly good flavors and juice chemistry. I continue to produce a refreshing style of Chardonnay. Generous fruit; beautiful texture and a kiss of oak.

TASTING NOTES

Consistent with my winemaking philosophy, this wine has a beautiful, rich texture to it. Yes, the oak is noticeable but the rich flavors of the fruit are evident. I get the lemon-lime citrus zest and generous aromas of green apples. The barrel fermentation enhanced the mouthfeel of the wine. I allow the wine to undergo Malo-Lactic fermentation which softens the acidity of the wine. The Sur-Lie aging provides the wine a creamy mid-palate layer which enhanced the overall richness. There also is a nice vanilla aroma from the barrels as well as a touch of spice.

The 2016 vintage was again a slightly early vintage. A mild winter with minimal rainfall contributed to an early bud break and early harvest. Our weather during bloom was better than the 2015 vintage and yields were higher. Ironically we picked the 2016 Chardonnay on the exact same day in September as we did in 2015.

WINEMAKING DETAILS

Harvested: September 7, 2016
TA: 5.8 gm/L
pH: 3.34
Alc. 12.5% Alc by vol.
Bottled: April 25, 2016
Production: 700 cases

The grapes that went into this blend were harvested at night under lights. This allows me the opportunity to pick the grapes in the cool morning hours when the fruit is cool and the juice chemistry is not affected by the warm daytime temperatures. This also allows us to process the grapes when they are cool thus we end up with a product that has better balance and is less phenolic. After pressing, the juice was settled and then racked to a selection of barrels and stainless steel tanks for fermentation. I used 15% new French Oak barrels and the balance was comprised of 1-8 year old French Oak barrels. After this Sur-Lie aging, the wine was stabilized and clarified in March and filtered prior to bottling. This Chardonnay is a very versatile wine and can be enjoyed with a variety of foods such as shellfish, poultry, and lite pasta dishes or simply by itself.