

NAPA VALLEY QUILT

“FOR NAPA VALLEY QUILT CHARDONNAY, WE LAYER COOL AND MODERATE CLIMATE VINEYARDS TO CREATE A BALANCED, YET CLASSIC STYLE. I WANT THE FRUITFUL NATURE OF THE PATCHWORK OF NAPA VALLEY TO SHINE. OUR PHILOSOPHY FOR QUILT HAS ACCOMPLISHED THAT GOAL.”



JOSEPH WAGNER, FIFTH GENERATION NAPA VALLEY WINEMAKER

2018 NAPA VALLEY CHARDONNAY

For this Chardonnay, we relied on vineyards from the Oak Knoll and Carneros Districts where the climate is distinctly cooler and foggier than the northern environs of Napa Valley. Carneros is a world unto itself. For one, much of the soil is sedimentary clay loam with heavy gravel due to the region's proximity to the mouth of the valley. This soil, combined with the chilling winds of the marine influence, yields a Chardonnay grape with impressive structure and a flinty minerality.

2018 GROWING SEASON

The winter of 2018 began with extremely dry weather with rainfall totals that were -40 to -60% below seasonal averages and temperatures that were +2 to +5% warmer than normal for the period from December through February. In March, the weather pattern changed and several cold winter storms increased rainfall totals by 150 to 175% above average. Due to the cool and wet weather, grapevine growth was delayed by two to three weeks and behind normal schedule across the Napa Valley. Fortunately, the cool and wet spring weather transitioned to warm, mild, and sunny weather for the months of May, June, and July. With the warm weather, grapevine growth was rapid and healthy. During this three-month period, the conditions for bloom were optimal, fruit set was even, and the resulting crop was above average. In late July and August, the persistent marine layer of daily fog kept temperatures at -3 to -5°F below normal. Due to the cool weather in the late summer period, the crop sized nicely and veraison started in mid to late August. Due to the relatively cool year, the grapes matured evenly while retaining much of their natural acidity, and had exceptional flavor and color development. We started harvesting the fruit in mid-September and completed harvest by the second week of October.

WINEMAKER NOTES

For our Quilt Chardonnay, the winemaking process begins when we call a pick. Regular visits and assessment of each block direct us to harvesting at the right moment. Our assessment consists of testing sugar levels, acidity and pH, but more importantly, waiting for phenolic/physiological maturity. We want autumn to have set in, with hard, brown seeds, copper canes, and yellowing of the canopy and a slight 'tan' to the golden clusters. This gives us the assurance that we will have no green tones in the wine and that this Chardonnay will be opulent and showy. Once in the cellar, we whole cluster light press in a bladder press. The free run juice settles for 48 hours at which point we rack off heavy lees and barrel-ferment the wine in 59 gallon French oak barrels (70% new) for 15 months. Fermentation can last 45 or more days in the cool cellar, lending weight to the wine with lees stirring during the extended fermentation. We then undergo 100% malolactic fermentation while still on lees to achieve additional creaminess and complexity. We delay sulfur additions as long as possible to maintain the characters that formed through each process and allow the wine to finish its aging with minimal racking.

TASTING NOTES

COLOR: Pale straw yellow with golden hues.

AROMATICS: Juicy white peach, honeysuckle, pear, white plum, and nectarine with notes of citrus and star anise.

PALATE: Refreshing stone fruit, kiwi, apricot, nectarine, and meyer lemon zest followed by hints of lightly toasted oak.

STRUCTURE: Bright, medium bodied, and rich with smooth and generous layers. Complex, mouthwatering acidity with a lively finish.

FOOD PAIRING

Oven baked chicken with white pepper and lemon, crab salad, or orzo salad with light lemon vinaigrette, goat cheese, and yellow peppers.



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