

# NAPA VALLEY QUILT

“FOR NAPA VALLEY QUILT, I SOURCE FRUIT FROM A PATCHWORK OF PRIME NAPA VALLEY VINEYARDS TO CREATE A CLASSIC CHARDONNAY MADE IN THE STYLE MY FAMILY HAS ALWAYS LOVED.”



JOSEPH WAGNER, FIFTH-GENERATION NAPA VALLEY WINEMAKER

## 2015 NAPA VALLEY CHARDONNAY

For this Chardonnay, we relied entirely on vineyards from the Carneros District 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.

## 2015 GROWING SEASON

The vineyards of Carneros often operate on a different timetable than other sites in Napa Valley. But the 2015 growing season was the great equalizer. It seems all appellations experienced very similar conditions that started with early bud break due to warm weather in February and March and parched soils from the prolonged drought. Then the spring turned cold, with below-normal temperatures, but fortunately, a warm and temperate summer followed, without any heat spikes. All of this led to the Chardonnay harvest in Carneros beginning nearly three weeks sooner than average, giving us the opportunity to harvest at optimum maturity.

## 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, 30% seasoned) 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 yellow with golden highlights.

**AROMATICS:** Ripe Fuji apple, buttery and toasty oak, honeydew melon, salty caramel, Meyer lemon and tropical fruit.

**PALATE:** Apple tart, caramelized pineapple, buttered toast, salty popcorn and lemon curd with notes of honey and melon. The layers of this wine blend vibrant and dense flavors seamlessly, as if you tossed ranch dressing, on a double cheeseburger, with a slice of pizza and fried pickles inside.

**STRUCTURE:** Medium bodied with a complex striation of flavors, a silky texture and a long, satiny finish.

## FOOD PAIRING

Crab cakes with lemon-dill sauce; butternut squash ravioli; roasted chicken with spring greens, fresh mango and macadamia nuts; Taleggio or Pont-l'Évêque cheese.

