

NAPA VALLEY QUILT

“FOR NAPA VALLEY QUILT CHARDONNAY, WE LAYER COOL CLIMATE CARNEROS VINEYARDS WITH SLIGHTLY WARMER OAK KNOLL LOCATIONS TO CREATE A BALANCED, YET CLASSIC STYLE. I WANT THE FRUITFUL NATURE OF THIS AMAZING REGION TO SHINE AND OUR PHILOSOPHY OF QUILT HAS ACCOMPLISHED THAT GOAL.”



JOSEPH WAGNER, FIFTH-GENERATION NAPA VALLEY WINEMAKER

2016 NAPA VALLEY CHARDONNAY

For this Chardonnay, we relied 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.

2016 GROWING SEASON

The vineyards of the Carneros and also Oak Knoll region, operate on a different timetable than other sites in Napa Valley. The 2016 growing season was no exception, offering up classic, near-perfect conditions for this cool, windy and wonderful part of the valley. Though bud break was early, a steady spring followed by a mild July and August saw canopy and fruit development lagging behind the normal schedule. Then a much-welcomed series of lusciously warm days that the season delivered to us in autumn brought the crop to ideal maturity. By the time a significant rain storm arrived mid-October, the fruit had been picked, with a crop of lower-than-usual yields but magnificent quality.

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 platinum-straw

AROMATICS: Ripe pears, roasted almonds, buttered toast, honey, lychee, jasmine blossoms, freshly washed river gravel, lemon zest.

PALATE: Baked apple with vanilla drizzle, pineapple-mango cream, buttered toast, salty popcorn and lemon curd with notes of nectarine and cantaloupe.

STRUCTURE: Medium bodied with a rich, generously textured and unctuous mouthfeel. Bright, mouthwatering acidity. A long, lingering 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.

