

The New Oregon Chardonnay

Winegrowers came to the Willamette Valley thirty years ago looking for the perfect place to grow the Burgundian varieties, Pinot noir and Chardonnay - a place where longer hours of daylight and cooler growing conditions would allow these North European varieties to ripen slowly, with a long period of flavor development at the end of the growing season. Unfortunately, most of the Chardonnay planted in Oregon in the '70s and '80s was the UC Davis Clone 108 selected for a much warmer climate that did not perform consistently here. So we started over in the mid-nineties with new "Dijon clones" imported directly from Burgundy, creating a revolution in Oregon Chardonnay.

"Oregon Transformed"

Sommelier Selections

"The wines using the Dijon clones in Oregon have complexity and vibrancy. They offer lush, rich, ripe fruit and spicy aromatics similar to California, but the mineral, earth and bright acidity gives these wines a uniqueness and sense of place that is so attractive in these days of mass produced, overblown, sweet and manipulated Chardonnay."

Patrick Comiskey

Wine Review Online

"Oregon's Chardonnays are showing character as they never did before... Chardonnay that's on a par with the region's much heralded Pinot Noirs... gently perfumed, well-structured, mineral-tinged wines with high-toned fruit... Like Meursault, the fruit is rich without being cloying, redolent of fresh apples and pears, and bears a pleasing hint of nuttiness."

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2007 CHARDONNAY • ESTATE GROWN

Certified Sustainably Grown

83% Dijon Clone, 17% Old Vine Wente Clone

Date picked: October 7, 2007

Grapes at harvest: Brix: 24.3, pH: 3.3, TA: 6.8, gr/Liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.1%, pH: 3.49, TA: 5.4, gr/Liter

788 cases produced, bottled September, 2008

CHARDONNAY CLONES AT BETHEL HEIGHTS: In 1994 we started planting new Dijon clones of Chardonnay at Bethel Heights, but left intact our original three acres of Wente Clone Chardonnay planted at Bethel Heights in 1977. Over the years we have come to respect what this old Wente clone contributes to our wine - a structure of bright acidity to balance the ripe richness of the Dijon clones.

THE 2007 VINTAGE: 2007 was a classic, cool Oregon vintage, similar to 2005. The summer provided adequate heat to ripen the fruit, and the fall finished cool, allowing the grapes to fully express their varietal character. It was a vintage that challenged the winegrowers to be at the top of their game. Nice weather at bloom produced a large crop that had to be severely thinned to achieve optimum ripening. When the fall turned rainy and cool, we marshaled our forces to pull more leaves around the fruit, as a hedge against botrytis, and to get more sun on the fruit. In the end the extra effort gave us clean ripe grapes, and wines with moderate alcohols and pure fruit character.

VINIFICATION: The fruit was whole-cluster pressed, barrel fermented in French oak (20% new barrels), aged on the lees with complete malolactic fermentation, stirred every two weeks, and bottled after eleven months in barrel.

TASTING NOTES: Aromas of cinnamon, clove, anise, and oak spice. Lush Anjou pear and Golden apples are balanced by a deep minerality and persistent acidity. This vivacious wine has the structure to age, but enough forward fruit to be enjoyed in its youth.