

THE NEW OREGON CHARDONNAY

Winegrowers came to the Willamette Valley thirty years ago looking for the perfect place to grow the Burgundian winegrape 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, the primary Chardonnay clone available in Oregon in the '70s and '80s was the infamous Davis clone 108, which did not perform consistently well in our climate. So we started over in the early nineties with new "Dijon clones" imported directly from Burgundy, creating a revolution in Oregon Chardonnay.

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 the relatively rare 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, especially welcome in warmer years.

FOOD RECOMMENDATION: The bright, bold acidity of this classic Chardonnay style lends itself to many food choices. As a contrast, it works well with rich texture and flavor, essentially cutting through and tempering the richness of the food. This wine also works well with sweet shellfish, and, given the acidity, some oyster and mussel preparations. Consider the appetizer "Mussels in Red Pepper Vinaigrette" on our website, "About Us, Our Recipes."

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2010 CHARDONNAY • ESTATE GROWN

Certified Sustainably Grown

65% Dijon Clone, 35% Old Vine Wente Clone

Dates picked: October 21, 22, and 23

Grapes at harvest: Brix 21.5, pH 3.02, TA 10.2 gr/Liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.0%, pH: 3.21, TA: 7.8 gr/Liter

420 cases produced, bottled September 21, 2011

Suggested retail \$25

THE 2010 VINTAGE: The 2010 growing season started very slowly, with cool, damp weather in both April and May. June was also cooler than normal, driving bloom into early July. Yields were lower than in typical years, due in part to early season weather conditions and also due to very aggressive crop thinning to compensate for the late start. Weather continued cool through the summer and well into September. But then the skies cleared and a perfect Indian Summer carried the fruit to ideal maturity late in October. We waited to pick until the last possible moment, and then, with rain on the horizon, we picked all our fruit in five days between the 18th and 23rd of October. Months of anxious worry and meticulous viticulture were rewarded with wines of moderate alcohol and excellent fruit intensity.

VINIFICATION: The fruit was whole-cluster pressed, barrel fermented in neutral 500L oak puncheons, aged on the lees with complete malolactic fermentation, and bottled after eleven months in barrel. It was bottled with a Stelvin closure.

90 WINE SPECTATOR

"Fresh and lively, showing citrusy tamarind accents around a racy core of green pear fruit. Should benefit from a year or two in the cellar. Drink now through 2015."