

## THE CASTEEL CHARDONNAY

Our family name on this reserve Chardonnay is our license to choose our personal favorite lots from the vintage and give them the luxury of a long slow fermentation in barrique. In 2017 our selection favored the winery block of Chardonnay planted in 1994 to the Dijon 76 selection, blended with a couple of favorite barrels from our oldest Chardonnay vines, the Wente selection planted in 1977.

## THE 2017 VINTAGE

2017 was our sixth very warm vintage in a row. Fortunately we had quite a lot of rain in the winter and early spring; total rainfall for the year was almost 20 inches above normal. The summer overall was hot and dry, punctuated by a couple of significant hot spells in August and early September with consecutive days over 100 degrees, but September cooled down mercifully, with a few brief rain events that helped maintain freshness in the vineyard through the final ripening phase.

“I feel that the 2017 wines have the best natural balance we have seen out of a warm vintage since 2012. In spite of the heat the wines have terrific acidity, relatively low alcohol, and the different parts of our Estate show their personalities without being muddled by vintage.” Ben Casteel

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There's a wealth of complexity and impressive, concentrated fruit here. Aromas of pears and baked apples, as well as lime, lead to a palate with smooth and alluringly fleshy build and concentrated, melon and spiced-pear flavors. So smooth and impressively long.

### 94 WINE ENTHUSIAST

This is a deep, dense, splendid example of top-tier Oregon Chardonnay.

BETHEL HEIGHTS VINEYARD  
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2017 CHARDONNAY • CASTEEL

LIVE *Certified*

Fruit source:

85% Dijon 76 selection, 15% Wente selection

Date picked: October 7, 2017

Grapes at harvest: Brix 21.7, pH 3.25, TA 6.9 g/L

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.3%, pH: 3.3, TA: 6.2 g/L

Barrel aged 12 months in French oak, 40% new barrels

Bottled unfinned January 3, 2019

290 Cases produced (580 6-pack cases)

**VINIFICATION:** The fruit was whole-cluster pressed, settled for 48 hours, and barrel fermented in 228 L oak barrels. The wine was aged on the lees with complete malolactic fermentation, racked to stainless steel tanks including all of the lees and aged in stainless for 3 additional months. The wine was racked with light filtration on the bottom of the tank to remove solids and bottled without fining.

**WINEMAKER NOTES:** 2017 is one my favorite vintages of the past decade for its natural balance, elegance, and transparency. The 2017 Casteel Chardonnay exemplifies this as much or more than any Chardonnay in our portfolio, providing both the tension our site provides so well but also the generosity of a warm vintage. This wine is showing well now but will improve with age over the next 5-7 years.