

CHARDONNAY AT BETHEL HEIGHTS

Chardonnay has been the preeminent white wine at Bethel Heights since the first vines were planted here in 1977. Today we have six different blocks of Chardonnay planted on various benches and slopes around our Estate vineyards. Our family name on this reserve **CHARDONNAY CASTEEL** is our license to choose our favorite lots from the vintage and give them the luxury of a long slow fermentation in barrique. The selection has varied from vintage to vintage.

THE 2018 VINTAGE

2018 was the sixth vintage in a row defined by heat in the Willamette Valley. Following a wet winter, the spring and summer were very dry and warm, leading to the first signs of veraison in early August. Fortunately our reliable marine winds kept night-time temperatures cool, preserving acidity in the fruit as it ripened, and welcome rain events in September carried the vines through the final ripening period. The very dry hot summer made for small clusters with very small berries that in many ways defined our 2018 wines.

“Not since 2008 have we seen wines with the early exuberance of fruit that one expects from a warm vintage, combined with such a lean muscular structure promising significant ageability.” Ben Casteel

94 JAMES SUCKLING

The nose here is fresh and chalky with a fresh, flinty edge to the sliced pears, apple pastry and white peaches. The palate has a fresh attitude with good focus on entry and a build of lemons and grapefruit with peaches and pears, then apple pie to close. The pick of the crop each vintage at Bethel Heights.

www.bethelheights.com



2018 CHARDONNAY • CASTEEL

Estate Grown

Fruit source: Winery block, Dijon76 selection

Date picked: September 27, 2018

Grapes at harvest: Brix 22.1, pH 3.09, TA 8 gr/L

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.1%, pH: 3.18, TA: 8 gr/L

Barrel aged 13 months in French oak, 54% new barrels,
and 3 months in stainless steel

Bottled unfined February 10, 2020

181 Cases produced

VINIFICATION: The fruit was whole-cluster pressed, settled for 72 hours, and barrel fermented in 228L and 350L oak barrels. The wine was aged on the lees in barrel for 13 months with complete malolactic fermentation, then racked to a stainless steel tank, 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: The 2018 Casteel Chardonnay is entirely from the block that rests immediately adjacent to the winery, planted in 1994. While it isn't the oldest block of Chardonnay on our property, it has produced the most consistent quality for the past several years. Extended aging in both barrels and stainless steel combined with full malolactic fermentation provides a richness and creamy texture to balance out the high natural acidity of both our site and the 2018 vintage. This bottling has tremendous tension and poise and will benefit from decanting for early consumption or 5-7 years of cellaring.