

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.

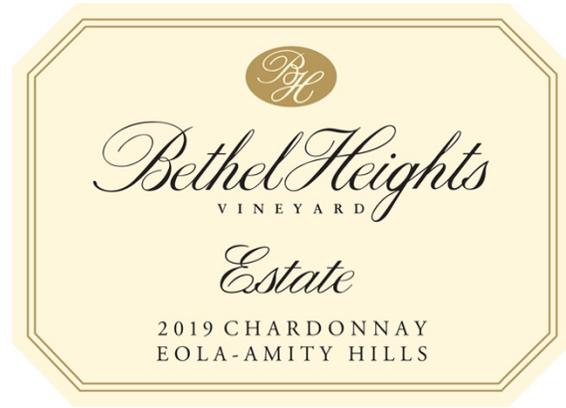
THE 2019 VINTAGE

In contrast to the previous five vintages which were all dry and quite warm, 2019 started with cool, moist weather in the Spring that persisted into early summer. Even after it warmed up somewhat in mid-summer, we had unusually high levels of humidity, and this continued into a cool, damp Fall. Maturation was delayed and disease pressure, amplified by the humid conditions, challenged growers every step of the way.

In spite of these challenges, 2019 had a happy ending. The crop was small, with small berries and lots of intensity. The cool season also allowed us to outperform on hang time. Instead of the normal 100 days, we were able to leave the fruit on the vines for 110 to 120 days without excess sugar accumulation, giving us enhanced depth and complexity.

95 WINE ADVOCATE

The 2019 Chardonnay Estate has detailed scents of fresh quince, white flowers, roasted almonds and flinty tones, offering up more nuance over time. Medium-bodied, it has a satiny texture and layer after layer of floral fruit on the extended finish, its fresh acidity calling you in for another sip.



2019 CHARDONNAY ESTATE

LIVE Certified

Harvest date: October 3 - 6, 2019

Grapes at harvest: Brix 21.8, pH 3.09, TA 8.0 gr/Liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.0%, pH: 3.26, TA: 6.6 gr/Liter

Fermented and aged 12 months in French oak, 40% new barrels

Bottled unfined February 2021

Cases produced: 398 cases in 750ml, 174 cases in 375ml

VINIFICATION: The grapes were whole cluster pressed at low pressure for four hours then settled at 45 °F for three days. The juice was then racked to 228 L barrels and fermented for 35-40 days with lees stirring done only from mid fermentation to near dryness. The new wine went through full malolactic fermentation and was aged on the lees undisturbed for 12 months. After blending trials the wines were then racked from barrel with their fermentation lees to a stainless steel tank for an additional 4 months prior to bottling.

WINEMAKER NOTES: For our Estate Chardonnay we make our picking decisions with tension and vibrancy over opulence and richness, as we believe this gives us the best expression of our sense of place. The 2019 vintage was cool, and the resulting wines are bursting with energy and vigor. This wine will benefit from cellaring for at least three years and/or decanting a few hours ahead of time.