

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 personal 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.

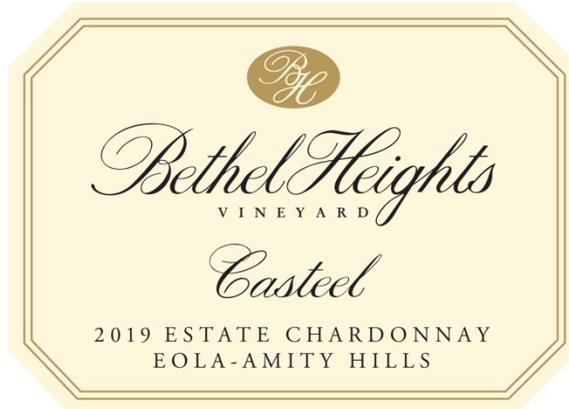
THE 2019 VINTAGE

In contrast to the previous five dry and warm vintages, 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 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; 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.

98 WINE ADVOCATE

The 2019 Chardonnay Casteel opens with touches of flint that blossom to fragrant white peaches, honey, hay and spring blossoms. The medium-bodied palate is packed with layer after layer of savory fruits, with bursts of freshness that highlight its exceptional perfume. The 2019 Casteel has a singular satiny texture that coats the mouth and makes for extraordinary length. It's a pleasure-packed iteration that offers youthful exuberance for those who like to drink younger Chardonnay, but it will offer a decade of evolution in the cellar as well.



2019 CHARDONNAY • CASTEEL

LIVE Certified

Fruit source: Justice Vineyard

Date picked: October 4, 2019

Grapes at harvest: Brix 22.1, pH 3.02, TA 7.0 gr/L

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.3%, pH: 3.29, TA: 6.2 gr/L

Barrel aged 11 months in French oak, 37% new barrels,
and 4 months in stainless steel

181 cases produced; bottled unfined February 2021

VINIFICATION: The fruit was whole-cluster pressed, settled for 48 hours, and barrel fermented in 228 L oak barrels. The wine was aged in barrels on the lees for 11 months with complete malolactic fermentation, racked to stainless steel tanks including all of the lees and aged in stainless for 4 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 goal for the Casteel Chardonnay is always to make the best expression of the vintage, regardless of where in the vineyard the grapes come from. In 2019 we took a strict departure from what it had been in the past, and crafted a wine made entirely from Justice Vineyard, now over 20 years old. The 2019 is a dense, coiled wine with saline edges to the bright tree fruits and citrus. As with all our 2019 wines, this wine will benefit from some cellaring.