

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 five 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 2021 VINTAGE

Throughout the Willamette Valley, 2021 is considered an outstanding vintage. It was generous in terms of yields, ripeness, and quality and health of the fruit. Overall, the growing season was earlier than average. Harvest started on Sept 14 and finished on October 12. There were a couple of extreme heat events early in the summer that were devastating to some crops in the Valley, but in the vineyards the timing was just right to scour the powdery mildew out of the vineyard without harming the fruit, which had not yet begun to soften. August was also very hot, but temperatures cooled significantly in September, and rain showers in September and early October allowed us to take advantage of an extended ripening period for enhanced flavor development.

CERTIFICATION

Bethel Heights Vineyard and Justice Vineyard achieved Organic certification in 2021. Lewman Vineyard, acquired in 2020, is in its second year of the required three years of probation for Organic certification. All three estate vineyards are certified LIVE, assuring our commitment to continual reduction of off-farm inputs, continual reduction of energy and water consumption, and increasing biodiversity.



2021 CHARDONNAY • CASTEEL

Certified Organically Grown

Fruit source: Bethel Heights Wente and Dijon 76

Harvest date: September 25-29, 2021

Grapes at harvest: Brix 22.8, pH 3.07, TA 8.3 gr/L

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.5%, pH: 3.23, TA: 7.6 gr/L
Barrel aged 12 months in French oak, 50% new barrels,
and 4 months in stainless steel

283 cases produced; bottled unfined February 13, 2023

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 from mid fermentation to near dryness. The new wine went through full malolactic fermentation and was aged on the lees undisturbed for 12 months. 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: 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. After a year exploring the possibilities from Justice in 2019, we turned our eyes back to Bethel Heights for the 2021. Hailing from both our oldest vines planted in 1977 and the adjacent block planted in 1994, this wine encapsulates the best of what we saw in 2021: the opulence of a warm year with the tension and vibrancy of a cool year. I don't normally allow myself to drift into hyperbole, but 2021 really was both sides of the seasonal coin.