

FORT ROSS

VINEYARD & WINERY · SONOMA COAST

2003 CHARDONNAY · FORT ROSS VINEYARD · SONOMA COAST

OVERVIEW

From our mountain vineyard on the “True Sonoma Coast”, Fort Ross Vineyard produces limited amounts of Estate-grown, cool-climate Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinotage. With spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean less than one mile away, the vineyard is divided into 28 separate blocks, one half to two acres in size, traversing elevations ranging from 1200 to 1700 feet above sea level. Owners, Lester and Linda Schwartz and their small crew began preparing the 44 acre vineyard in 1994 and planting began in 1998.

VINTAGE

Following the near perfect vintage of 2002, 2003 lived up to the challenge and provided Fort Ross with wonderfully ripe Chardonnay. Due to the vineyard’s marine-moderated climate, the Chardonnay easily weathered 2003’s heat waves and ripened slowly and evenly into late October.

WINEMAKING

The grapes for this Chardonnay were handpicked in the cool early morning hours in 5 gallon buckets. Once at the winery, the fruit was whole cluster pressed and allowed to settle for 24 hours. Then the juice went to a mixture of 33% new and 67% 1 and 2 year old French oak barrels for alcoholic and malolactic fermentation. After 15 months of maturation in the barrels, the 2003 Chardonnay was bottled in the spring of 2005.

TASTING NOTES

This is not a typical California Chardonnay but reflects a more Burgundian sensibility. The 2003 Fort Ross Chardonnay is a testament to the slow ripening vintage from which it was born, modulated by the cool coastal climate of the vineyard. The aromatics reveal the signature minerality of the vineyard between layers of succulent fruit, predominantly pear, honeydew melon and white peach. Framed by balanced acidity, the palate is full, lush and leads to a long, elegant finish.

COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay
SELECTIONS: Old Hyde and Wente field selections
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
AGING: 15 months in 100% French; 33% new
ALCOHOL 14.5
ACIDITY: .60 g/100ml
pH: 3.41
BOTTLING: Unfined
BOTTLED: April 4, 2005
CASES PRODUCED: 713 cases 750 ml, 75 cases 12/375 ml
RELEASE DATE: July 2006