

FORT ROSS

VINEYARD & WINERY · SONOMA COAST

2004 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

After a very early budbreak and warm weather that accelerated vine development it looked as if we would have a bountiful crop, however the weather turned cold during bloom and there was a very light berry set. Some blocks ultimately produced only a half a ton per acre. The climate was then moderate for most of the growing season but during August and early September there was a period of unusually hot and dry weather. Being so near to the ocean we were able to wait for the desired level of ripeness and fortunately the weather cooled off. The vineyard’s marine-moderated climate allowed the grapes to ripen slowly and fully into mid-late September when we harvested small berries with complete flavor development and lively acidity.

WINEMAKING

The grapes for this Chardonnay were handpicked in the cool early morning hours in small five-gallon buckets. Once at the winery, the fruit was hand sorted and then whole cluster pressed. After pressing, the wine underwent barrel and malolactic fermentation in a combination of new and 1 year used French oak. Once the final blend was determined, the wine was racked and bottled without fining or filtration to maintain the natural flavor, texture and youthfulness of the wine. This wine is comprised of 70% small berried old Hyde field selection for its richness and sleek structure and 30% old Wente, which is fruity and graceful.

TASTING NOTES

Our 2004 Chardonnay reflects a more Burgundian sensibility with generous aromas of kaffir lime, lemon curd and fragrant honeysuckle framed by hazelnut and a gentle hint of oak. The complex palate of full and succulent Chardonnay fruit flavors are buttressed by a savory citrus acidity and the cool coastal vineyards’ signature minerality. The focused finish expresses fine symmetry with an echo of the light oak in addition to a dash of clove spice that carries through the elegantly smooth finale.

COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay
APPELLATION: Sonoma Coast
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: 70% Old Hyde - 30% Wente field selections
AGING: 17 months French; 45% new oak
ALCOHOL 14%
ACIDITY: .57 g/100ml
pH: 3.63
BOTTLING: Unfined and unfiltered
BOTTLED: March 2, 2006
HARVESTED: October 4-8, 2004
RELEASE DATE: Spring 2007
CASES PRODUCED: 264 cases 750ml