

FORT ROSS

VINEYARD & WINERY · SONOMA COAST

2006 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

2006 was a perfect year for growing Chardonnay. The long, mostly cool summer allowed for steady development, giving the grapes a generous hang time to achieve physiological ripeness and full flavors. The spectacular weather during bloom was probably the best since the memorable 1997 vintage for coastal vineyards and the set was ideal, the finest in the 9 year history of Fort Ross Vineyard. The vineyard’s marine-moderated climate allowed the grapes to ripen slowly and fully into early-mid October 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. The fruit was hand sorted in the vineyard and gently whole cluster pressed at the winery. After pressing, the wine underwent primary and malolactic fermentation in a combination of 30% new and 70% used French oak. This discrete use of new oak allowed the fruit to shine without a cloud of new oak. During extended blending trials that produced countless blends from different permutations of the distinctive barrels, blocks and field selections we determined that our 2006 Chardonnay was seamlessly balanced when all of the barrels were blended together, including those we had set aside for the Reserve bottling. The result is that there will be no separate Reserve Chardonnay in 2006. This wine is comprised of 66% small berried old Hyde field selection for its richness and sleek structure and 34% old Wente for its luscious fruit and grace.

TASTING NOTES

Our 2006 Chardonnay reflects a more Burgundian sensibility with generous aromas of crisp kaffir lime leaves, sun ripened apricots and fragrant honeysuckle blossoms framed by hints of citrus. The complex palate of full and succulent fruit, including melon and lemon curd, is buttressed by a savory acidity and the cool coastal vineyard’s signature minerality. The focused finish expresses fine symmetry with a nuanced echo of oak and a dash of hazelnut that carries through the elegantly smooth finale.

COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay
APPELLATION: Sonoma Coast
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: 66% Old Hyde - 34% Wente field selections
AGING: 10 months French; 30% new oak
ALCOHOL 14%
ACIDITY: .54 g/100ml
pH: 3.89
HARVESTED: October 10, 2006
BOTTLED: August 21, 2007
RELEASE DATE: December 15, 2007
CASES PRODUCED: 1985 cases 750ml