

FORT ROSS

VINEYARD & WINERY · SONOMA COAST

2008 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 30 separate blocks, one-half to two acres in size, traversing elevations ranging from 1200 up to 1700 feet above sea level. Owners, Lester and Linda Schwartz and their small crew began preparing the 50 acre vineyard in 1994 and planting began in 1998. The last two blocks were planted in 2008 – during a pause during the harvest.

VINTAGE

This was a Biblical year in the industry - with frost, unseasonal heat and then unusual cold. This was the year when our proximity to the ocean and our steep slopes proved to be our salvation – rather than a farming challenge. The damaging frost that destroyed so much of the 2008 harvest in the low lying vineyards did not affect the FORT ROSS VINEYARD - as the heavy, freezing air did not settle on our steep slopes. Our proximity to the ocean also moderated the extreme heat that forced many vineyards to pick earlier than they had planned. We could then take advantage of the unusually cool weather during harvest and pick when the flavors were at their fullest.

WINEMAKING

The grapes for this Chardonnay were handpicked during the cool hours of the night 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. During extended blending trials that produced countless blends from different permutations of the field selections (clones), blocks and barrels we determined that our 2008 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 2008. This wine is comprised of 60% small berried old Hyde field selection chosen for its richness and sleek structure and 40% old Wente for its luscious fruit and grace.

TASTING NOTES

The delicately balanced bright fruit and the crisp minerality of our 2008 release demonstrates the ideal of cool climate Sonoma Coast Chardonnay patiently picked at the optimum moment. Delicate honeysuckle blossom, white peach and melon aromas perfume the glass. Refined and elegant, focused flavors of pear, honeydew melon and ripe apple, enlivened by the vineyard’s signature minerality, linger on the graceful finish.

COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay
APPELLATION: Sonoma Coast
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: 60% Old Hyde - 40% Wente field selections
AGING: 10 months French; 30% new oak
ALCOHOL 14.2%
ACIDITY: .57 g/100ml
pH: 3.66
HARVESTED: September 23, 2008
BOTTLED: June 29, 2009
RELEASE DATE: March 2010
CASES PRODUCED: 879 cases 750ml