

CHATEAU MONTELENA

Chateau Montelena's 19th century stone structure stands as a quality icon in Napa Valley, consistently producing some of the finest wines in California.



Napa Valley Chardonnay 2013

Napa Valley, California

ESTATE

Chateau Montelena's history is one of the deepest and most storied in the Napa Valley and California. Founded just north of Calistoga in 1882, it was one of the largest wineries in the state. Prohibition put an end to Montelena's winemaking, and the next major era began in 1968, when Jim Barrett purchased the estate. Jim fell in love with this exceptional property, blessed with a complex mix of soils, slopes and biodiversity of wildlife and fauna. He had a dream of creating wine at the level of the great First Growths of Bordeaux, and set about replanting the vineyard, outfitting the winery with modern equipment, and studying the processes necessary for farming and winemaking at the highest quality level.

WINE

Montelena has never changed in its philosophy of bringing the sunshine of California in a style that is structured, balanced and age worthy. In 1976, in what is now memorialized as "The Judgment of Paris," Chateau Montelena Napa Valley Chardonnay was the top-ranking wine against four white Burgundies and five other California Chardonnays in a blind tasting with a who's-who of the French food and wine industry judging. The rest, as they say, is history.

VINEYARD

Soils: Sourced from vineyards located in the south-central Napa Valley appellation, near the base of Mt. Veeder and Dry Creek Valley Road. The vineyard site, developed from old ocean terraces and alluvial fans, contains a lot of sedimentary material that gives moderate drainage and slight acidity.

Farming: Chateau Montelena is committed to sustainable farming and produces wine in their solar powered winery.

WINEMAKING

Grape Varieties: 100% Chardonnay

Fermentation: Temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks to allow the wines to ferment slowly and evenly.

Aging: 10 months in French oak barrels, 10% new. Bottled August 2014.

Alcohol: 13.6% ABV

VINTAGE

The stage was set early on in 2013, when normally reliable spring rains never materialized, and the likelihood of real drought appeared on the horizon. Chateau Montelena has dealt with these types of vintages before, as far back as 1978, so thankfully the skilled staff was familiar with the extraordinary potential of the wines as long as stress in the vineyard is managed and attention to detail is maintained in the cellar. A pleasant, albeit unexpected, splash of rain in June set up a picture perfect summer and ideal ripening weather all the way into August and an early harvest. Boots on the ground, both in the vineyard and the winery, make all the difference during dry years as flavors, aromatics, and textures in fruit evolve and develop at astonishing rates.

WINEMAKER TASTING NOTE

"The concentration in the 2013 Chardonnay is really what sets it apart. In the glass, the aromatics lean toward the floral and citrus families with rose petals, lemon blossom, and just a hint of ripe melon sneaking through. While the palate is opulent, full of lemon meringue, peach pie, and ripe strawberry, the vibrancy of the acidity reliably lays the foundation for food pairing and aging for many years to come. In classic Montelena fashion, the minerality steps into the spotlight on the finish, coupled with just enough orange zest, and the lingering richness of crème brûlée." - MATT CRAFTON