

Chateau Montelena 2006 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Winemaker's Notes

"All's well that ends well" should be the motto for the 2006 Chardonnay vintage. Cold and wet weather dominated in the early months, slightly delaying the onset of our growing season and slowing spring vine development. Warmer and drier conditions prevailed from May onward but we anticipated harvest to start about three weeks later than average. This enabled the fruit to mature slowly, with excellent ripeness and great chemistry. As a result, the grapes developed precisely the flavors we seek to create the classic, finely balanced, Montelena style of Chardonnay.

Vintage Weather

We night harvested nearly the entire crop. This technique allows us to bring in cool fruit, a condition in which grapes can best retain their flavor and acid balance. Next, we gently whole cluster pressed a little more than half of the crop to coax out juice with bright, delicate fruit flavors. The remaining grapes were conventionally de-stemmed and pressed, providing a little more extraction of both flavor and aroma compounds from the skins. Traditional Montelena style Chardonnay calls for 100% French oak, but carefully applied. So we used a little less than 15% new barrels to retain the brilliant fruit aromas and flavors, while avoiding malolactic fermentation to keep the wine crisp and refreshing.

Tasting Notes

In the glass the wine is exactly what you would expect from a young Montelena Chardonnay, showing bright yellow gold, with good color density. It smells great, like a green apple pie, bright and a little citrus-y, a bowlful of fresh fruit. The palate is very nice, very smooth, with classic Chardonnay flavors of apple and kiwi, and a lovely finish that leaves the palate refreshed and wanting more. Typically a little tight in its youth, a textbook characteristic of a Chateau Montelena Chardonnay, this wine will reward you with pleasing structure and complexity after some time in the cellar.



Production and Technical Data

Harvest Dates:	September 12 to September 27
Bottling Date:	July 2007
Release Date:	March 2008
Production:	7,000cases
Appellation:	Napa Valley
Time in Oak:	9 months
Sugar at Harvest:	24.1° brix
Alcohol:	13.8%