

Chateau Montelena 2005 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Winemaker's Notes

The 2005 Vintage was excellent for ripening weather, crop yield and juice quality resulting in ideal conditions for flavor and fruit chemistry development. In fact, for the entire season we enjoyed a very mild and overall good weather pattern. In the end it was a fun, smooth running and all-around great harvest where everything just *clicked*.

Vintage Weather

Extensive early season rains slightly delayed spring bud break. This was followed by a cooler-than-average summer, and ultimately a somewhat later-than-typical Chardonnay harvest. Consistently cool and even ripening conditions were seen for the 2005 growing season, resulting in excellent fat ripe fruit with low sugars and balanced chemistries. This gave great ripeness and flavor and wine without excessive alcohol from high sugars. All of the Chardonnay was harvested at night in order to assure delivery of good cool fruit. To achieve flavor concentration without bitterness we used two processing methods: crushing and de-stemming 48% of the fruit, and pressing the remaining 52% as whole clusters. We also continued the Montelena style of minimal and carefully-applied new French oak, using a little less than 10% new wood to retain the brilliant fruit aroma and flavors. Finally, we avoided any malolactic fermentation in order to keep the wine crisp, refreshing, and tasty.

Tasting Notes

In the glass the wine displays our typical bright green, yellow-gold color. On the nose it is a big bowl of fresh fruit, with intense green apple, fresh honeydew melon, and citrus in the background. The flavors follow, leading with classic Napa Valley Chardonnay varietal character and showing strong Bartlett pear. The palate is one of fresh, huge fruit - lovely, luscious, and mouthwatering. This Chardonnay is built to age, and I fully expect that after a couple of years of proper cellaring its many layers of underlying structure will begin to emerge. So as tasty as this wine is now, by then it will really be rocking!



Production and Technical Data

Harvest Dates:	September 15 to September 30
Bottling Date:	August 2006
Release Date:	March 2007
Production:	8,800cases
Appellation:	Napa Valley
Time in Oak:	6 to 8 months
Sugar at Harvest:	21.9° to 24.1° brix
Alcohol:	13.5%