



2009 “GOLD RIDGE HILLS” CHARDONNAY

Petersen Vineyard and Antonio Mountain Vineyard



VINEYARD & VINTAGE NOTES

Both vineyards represent excellent examples of the challenges and opportunity afforded when growing fruit in the cold conditions of the extreme Sonoma Coast. Antonio Mountain sits 4 miles from Tomales Bay in the far southwestern corner of the Sonoma Coast. Its proximity to the Pacific Ocean is compounded by ever present heavy fog at night. While Petersen is 4 miles further inland, its location on a higher ridge line captures the cool winds almost daily. Both sites benefit from the unique Gold Ridge soil type which consists of deep, well drained soils formed by weathered sandstone combined with very fine loam. The 2009 vintage was impacted by the continuing drought conditions that began in 2007. The smaller than usual cluster size benefited nicely from a long and very even growing season that extended harvest into late October through November. The fruit was well developed showing great complexity and potential.

HARVEST AND VINIFICATION

The cold evening fog off the Pacific Ocean chilled vineyard temperatures to under 45 degrees as we hand harvested at night. Picking at night allows the fruit to enter the winery in a cold state which assures the integrity of varietal character and all its nuances. Whole clusters were pressed gently, yielding minimum oxidation and the lowest possible level of solids for fermentation. The juice was then chilled and inoculated with a pure strain of Montrachet yeast and put to barrel for fermentation.

BARREL FERMENTATION AND AGING

The barrels of Tonnellerie Sirugue from Burgundy are ideal for enhancing the stylistic vision of our Chardonnay. These barrels are 36-month air dried with medium plus and elegant plus toast. I have used 60% new barrels for the 2009 vintage as the strength and complexity of the 2009 fruit invited the full development that new French oak offers. Fermentation was allowed to finish in these barrels where it remained sur lees for the next 10-months. Malolactic fermentation was encouraged and the resulting rich texture balanced nicely against the bright malic acid. The result is a graceful and well structured palate.

TASTING NOTES

The aromatics are highlighted by a diverse range of both citrus and tropical fruits with traces of fresh green apple. The toast and spice components are in the early stages of reaching full integration. There are emerging elements of a crème brûlée richness on the palate surrounded by a silky acid matrix. It is showing zesty lemon and fresh pear with a center core of tropical fruit and green apple. The aging potential for this wine should be exceptional given the bright acidity and complex fruit profile. This will evolve dramatically over the next 6 to 12-months and then continue to evolve at a slower rate for 4 to 6 years. As delicious as I find this by itself, it will be a great partner with food!

–Anthony Austin, Winemaker, December 20, 2010

Vineyard Sources	Petersen Vineyard (78%) Antonio Mountain Vineyard, (22%)
Varietal & Clone	100% Chardonnay, Dijon 95, Clone 4, Wente Clone
Harvest Dates	October 26th through November 12th.
Barrel Regimen	10 months sur lees, French Oak, 60% new, Tonnellerie Sirugue
Battonage	Hand stirred 4 times per month for the initial 6 months followed by 3 times per month for the remaining time in barrel
Alc.	14.3%
pH	3.30
Bottling Date	September 8, 2010
Release Date	Fall 2010
Cases Produced	1,165

CRITICS REVIEWS PREVIOUS VINTAGES:

“Rich, toasty nose, plush, nougaty with well-knit flavors”

Five Stars, Best of Show, Quarterly Review of Wines, 2008 Vintage

“Enormously complex in the interaction of fruit, acidity, lees, oak and fine tannins.”

92 Points, Wine Enthusiast, 2007 Vintage

“An elegantly styled Chardonnay...long on the finish.”

4 Stars, Ron Wiegand, Restaurant Wine, 2007 Vintage

“Rich doesn’t begin to describe this Chardonnay. It is humongous... all sorts of buttercream, crème brûlée and smoked butter layers.”

93 Points, Wine Enthusiast, 2006 Vintage

“This is an impressive and complex Burgundian-style Chardonnay that tastes like a first class Meursault.”

93 Points, International Wine Review, 2005 Vintage

“Expressive notes of honeysuckle, white peaches, and flowers... this beauty can be enjoyed over the next 3 years.”

91 Points, Robert Parker, The Wine Advocate, 2003 Vintage