



MARTINELLI
WINERY & VINEYARDS

Charles Ranch Chardonnay
Sonoma Coast
2011

Vineyard Character

The Charles Ranch was once one of the largest sheep ranches in Sonoma County. George Charles was a fourth generation rancher in the vast rugged hills and raised 2,000 head of sheep along with a small herd of bison. George's son-in-law, Lee Martinelli Sr., was a successful third generation grape grower and consulted with George as to which grape variety would be the most suitable to plant in this unique climate. This distinct micro-climate is two miles inland from the Pacific coastline at Fort Ross and is ideally suited for growing Burgundian varietals. In 1980 George sold his herd and used the steep 14 acre pasture to plant Chardonnay, becoming a pioneer of grape growing in an area that is now considered a prime viticultural region. The vineyard was planted in 1982.

Growing Year

This was one of the coolest growing years on record in the last 30 years, especially during the month of June. Due to the cool weather, harvest was later than usual. These wines will age well, and show more structure due to the increased acidity from the cooler growing season.

Wine Statistics

The Chardonnay grapes are picked between 24 and 26 degrees brix to ensure mature ripe fruit flavors. The fruit is hand selected at harvest time by Lee Martinelli Sr., who tastes them and chooses when to pick according to the developed concentration of flavors in the berries. The wine is 100% barrel fermented with wild yeast, resting in 50% new French oak for 10 months before bottling. The wine is neither heat nor cold stabilized, and is un-fined and un-filtered, clarified only by racking before bottling.

Case Production: 156

Tasting Notes

The 2011 Charles Ranch Chardonnay is perfumed with cedar, citrus, pineapple and toasted nuts. The palate reveals dry and crisp white peach, quince and pineapple along with a balanced, supple finish.

Historical Acclaim

2011 Vintage

- 93 points Robert M Parker Jr., The Wine Advocate
- 93 points Antonio Galloni, Vinous

2010 Vintage

- 94 points Antonio Galloni, The Wine Advocate
- 92 points Josh Reynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar
- 90 points James Laube, The Wine Spectator

Winemaker: Bryan Kvamme

Consulting Winemaker: Erin Green