



Charles Ranch Chardonnay
Sonoma Coast
2012

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 varieties. 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 1981.

Growing Year

This was a fairly mild year, similar to 2007 and 2009. The harvest looked like it was going to be early because of the early heat and bud break, but this ended up being a long, drawn out season with consistent growing temperatures. The wines have good tannins, structure, and a nice acid balance.

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: 192

Tasting Notes

The 2012 Charles Ranch Chardonnay has a beautifully perfumed nose of jasmine and apple spice. The palate is dense with flavors of lemon and grapefruit, ending with a lengthy finish.

Historical Acclaim

2012 Vintage

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

2011 Vintage

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

Winemaker: Bryan Kvamme

Consulting Winemaker: Erin Green