



MARTINELLI
WINERY & VINEYARDS

Charles Ranch Chardonnay
Fort Ross – Seaview / Sonoma Coast
2014

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 1981.

Growing Year

The growing year in 2014 was the third dry year in a row and was full of unforeseen challenges provided by Mother Nature. You would think the ongoing drought, excessive heat from March thru June, and hail in early April would have brought down the quality of this vintage. Thankfully this was not the case! Even though the harvest was very early, the small berry size and healthy yields have produced very well balanced wines; they are not over-bearing in tannin or structure, and are a pleasure to drink.

Production Notes

Each vineyard block goes through meticulous sample testing and is picked at optimum brix levels to ensure mature, ripe fruit flavors. These grapes are gently pressed and barrel fermented with wild yeast. After malolactic fermentation the wine is *sur lie* aged in 50% new French oak for 10 months before bottling. The wine is neither heat nor cold stabilized, un-fined and un-filtered, and is clarified only by racking before bottling.

Case Production: 62

Tasting Notes

Our 2014 Charles Ranch Chardonnay has aromas of honeysuckle and hazelnut. The palate is rich and inviting with bright lemon followed by a creamy finish with hints of cedar.

Historical Acclaim

2014 Vintage

- 94+ points The Wine Advocate

Winemaker: Bryan Kvamme

Consulting Winemaker: Erin Green