



GROWING SEASON

Mother Nature blessed us with an ideal growing season for the second consecutive year in 2013. It started out as one of the driest and warmest seasons on record, which led to an early budbreak in late February. To the relief and good fortune of Sonoma's winegrowers, night temperatures in March and April never dipped below 33°F, mitigating any frost threats. May temperatures crept into the '90s, and the "vintage of early" continued its course with flowering commencing three weeks ahead of schedule. With no adverse weather to interrupt pollination, fruit set occurred briskly and beautifully in mid-May for Chardonnay. A brief rain of just a half-inch in June led to humid conditions and thus mildew and pest pressure for the grapevines, but warm days in July thwarted the only real weather challenge of the season. Temperatures suddenly decreased to a more moderate level in August with impeccable timing. With Chardonnay grapes in the final ripening stage of development at that time, these cooler mid-summer days allowed for the berries to retain their natural acidity and develop even brighter and more concentrated fruit character, all while keeping sugar levels low. All these factors combined to create the best recipe for perfectly balanced grapes, but what truly separated 2013 from other vintages was the early established, uniform clusters during fruit set and the lack of sunburn at the end of the growing season. The copious crop was also yet another blessing after such a generous 2012 vintage.

VINEYARDS

The final blend of 2013 Jordan Chardonnay began with nearly 20 different vineyard blocks from eight sites on the east side of the Russian River. Two factors are paramount in the selection of our growers: vineyard sites with moderately cool temperatures that allow for lively fruit and crisp acidity and well-drained, gravelly soils that provide both physiologically mature fruit and mineral characters in the finish of the wine. It is this necessary combination of climate and soil that shares a common thread with the White Burgundies that inspire our style of winemaking.

VITICULTURE

Due to the near-perfect weather during budbreak and bloom, the crop was plentiful from the beginning, giving us the opportunity to drop excess fruit after both fruit set and cluster counting. This thinning technique helped to maintain an even balance in the canopy throughout the summer. Leaf pulling and shoot positioning occurred over several weeks in June. The minor rain incident in late June led to 100 percent humidity, which increased the chance for mildew pressure in the vineyards through early July. Losses in both quantity and quality were minimized for viticulturists who thoughtfully positioned their grapevine shoots, thinned and balanced the high-yielding crop, judiciously applied vineyard applications, and leafed the morning side of the vine rows to aid sun exposure and air movement. The long hours our family growers invested in preserving the perfect fruit set paid off in the uniformity of véraison amongst the clusters during July and early August. In a typical year, we like to do a second leafing in late summer to let more sunlight into the fruit zone, but as we got closer to our Indian summer, we opted to keep additional canopy to protect the fruit from sunburn. To our delight, the final days before harvest experienced no hot spikes at all. Irrigation was stopped about six weeks prior to harvest, allowing the vines to focus their energy on the fruit versus the canopy's leaves. The vines needed very little manipulation from our viticultural team in 2013. It was déjà vu during harvest, with big smiles from our growers and winemaking staff on the heels of an exceptional 2012.

HARVEST

Continuing the vintage's early trend, all fruit was handpicked in the coolness of the night and early morning hours before sunrise, beginning on September 6. As warmer weather prevailed the second week of September, fruit maturity peaked, which sent our crews into overdrive. The Chardonnay harvest was swiftly completed by September 18 (just days before a quick blast of seasonal rain, followed by a cooling trend). Sugar levels averaged 24 Brix. Taking place ten days earlier than in 2012, the 2013 harvest yielded pristine clusters with purity of fruit flavors. Due to the complete absence of sunburn, the fruit flavors exploded in our mouths. For the Jordan flavor profile, it was truly a dream vintage poised to best the 2012—a special year that left us grateful for the blessings of Mother Nature.