



GROWING SEASON

Nature often rewards grape growers and winemakers with an excellent vintage the year after an extremely challenging one, and we're thrilled to report that this was the case in 2018. On the heels of the difficult 2017 vintage, 2018 reminded us of the 2012 vintage—one of the finest we've seen in more than 40 years of winemaking.

After years of drought, hot summers and early harvests, 2018 returned to what we call the “old normal.” Timing for the entire growing season was three to four weeks later than in recent years and reminded us of classic vintages from the 1990s, when winter temperatures remained cool and brought just enough rainfall. Bud break occurred at a more typical time in late March, and very little rain or wind during the May flowering period resulted in a generous but not excessive cluster count. When fruit set occurred in June, the crop size looked average, but as summer progressed, the clusters filled out beautifully, with much heavier clusters than usual.

August brought foggy, cool mornings, without the usual late-summer heat spikes. The only real weather concerns were a single heat spike in June during fruit set, and a little rain in late September. Fortunately, all of Jordan's Chardonnay grapes were picked before the rain, and the weather was glorious throughout October with cool, foggy mornings and sunny days.

VINEYARDS

The 2018 Jordan Chardonnay was blended from 11 vineyard blocks in the Russian River Valley, cultivated by five different growers. When selecting fruit sources for each vintage, Jordan seeks out vineyard sites with moderately cool temperatures that allow for bright fruit flavors and crisp acidity, along with well-drained, gravelly soils that provide both physiologically mature grapes and minerality. This combination of climate and soil shares a common thread with the White Burgundies that inspire Jordan's winemaking style.

VITICULTURE

Due to the similarities between the 2012 and 2018 vintages, Jordan's vineyard team was able to use the 2012 cluster weights to assess the crop level for the current vintage. We're never sure how many tons per acre a block of grapes will produce, and while experience helps, growers and winemakers are more often wrong than right when it comes to crop estimates. This vintage was no exception; rather than producing an average yield as we'd initially expected, cluster sizes in many blocks came in at a record high.

HARVEST

August days had such long, cool mornings and moderately warm afternoons in September that we delayed all chardonnay picks to give the grapes more hang time. With no threat of rain in the forecast in early or mid-September, we had the luxury of letting the grapes reach full maturity, concentrating their varietal aromas, mid-palate character and depth of fruit. Picking began September 18 and continued until October 14, which allowed the small berries to develop bright, apple flavors. These were some of the most delicious chardonnay grapes our Russian River vineyards have ever produced, bursting with bright intensity.

-Maggie Kruse, winemaker