



CHATEAU MONTELENA
ESTABLISHED 1882

2017 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton, September 2019

INTRODUCTION

The 2017 Chardonnay is the quintessential embodiment of how perspective, perseverance, and adaptability can drive a vintage. It's easy to be dismissive of a growing season beset by wild fluctuations in temperature, not to mention low yields, after a comparatively classic vintage in 2016. The unique and demanding growing conditions presented a rare, stylistic opportunity in crafting a wine that is at once exceptionally concentrated, but at *ideal* ripeness. As the heat continued to build in mid-August, and the "standards" of balance in flavor and texture transformed amidst the reality of the vintage, we allowed our ideas and our ideals to guide our decision-making in the field and the cellar. Yes, yields were very low and our self-imposed, narrow picking window was extraordinarily challenging for both the vineyard and cellar crews, but the resulting wine is every bit as special and delicious as we had hoped.

VINTAGE WEATHER

A very wet, cool winter followed by a moderate spring seemed to portend another temperate, classic vintage. However, the summer had other ideas as the weather pattern peppered intense heat, dry winds, and very little marine layer amidst already warm conditions. An intricate understanding of ripening along with a deft hand in the vineyard were required to take advantage of anomalously short picking windows to achieve exemplary fruit flavors and aromas. It was an exciting and worthy challenge for our veteran crew.

NOSE

The wine opens with fresh peach, apricot, and honeydew amidst citrus blossom and rose water. The diversity of aromas in this vintage is astounding as the floral characteristics begin to take center stage with time in the glass along with ample fresh pear and cinnamon.

PALATE

Lush, viscous, and driven by lemon curd, the palate leans toward creaminess but with enough bright acid, green apple, and toast to bring balance and finesse. The ripeness of the vintage drives the mouthfeel as the flavors exude freshness and vibrancy, a unique combination.

FINISH

Concentrated and persistent, again stone fruit appear, albeit in candied form, along with a hint of white pepper and plenty of orange zest.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES

August 23 – September 4

ALCOHOL

13.9%

BLEND

100% Chardonnay

BARREL AGING

10 months, French oak

BOTTLING DATES

July 17–27, 2018

WINEMAKER

Matt Crafton