



CHATEAU MONTELENA
ESTABLISHED 1882

2013 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton, August 2015

INTRODUCTION

The secret to making great wine in 2013 was actually quite simple: focus on the fundamentals. That begins in the winter when our vineyard manager selects the cover crop blend specifically suited to each of our myriad soil types and continues through pruning, training, suckering, leafing, and thinning. And that's just the farming side. In February, a full six months before a berry crosses the crush pad, we're reading the tea leaves—the weather patterns, the soil moisture, the life stages of the native flora in the vineyards—to get an idea of what we can expect in the weeks and months ahead. It takes time, experience, instinct, and a little bit of luck, but that's how great wine is made and how we've always done it.

The stage was set early on in 2013, when normally reliable spring rains never materialized, and the likelihood of real drought appeared on the horizon. We've dealt with these types of vintages before, as far back as 1978, so we know the extraordinary potential of the wines as long as stress in the vineyard is managed and attention to detail is maintained in the cellar. A pleasant, albeit unexpected, splash of rain in June set up a picture perfect summer and ideal ripening weather all the way into August and an early harvest. Boots on the ground, both in the vineyard and the winery, make all the difference during dry years as flavors, aromatics, and textures in fruit evolve and develop at astonishing rates.

The concentration in the 2013 Chardonnay is really what sets it apart. In the glass, the aromatics lean toward the floral and citrus families with rose petals, lemon blossom, and just a hint of ripe melon sneaking through. While the palate is opulent, full of lemon meringue, peach pie, and ripe strawberry, the vibrancy of the acidity reliably lays the foundation for food pairing and aging for many years to come. In classic Montelena fashion, the minerality steps into the spotlight on the finish, coupled with just enough orange zest, and the lingering richness of crème brûlée.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES

August 26 to September 14, 2013

ALCOHOL

13.6%

BARREL AGING

10 months, 100% French oak,
10% new

BOTTLING DATE

August 2014

RELEASE DATE

September 2015

WINEMAKER

Matt Crafton