



CHATEAU MONTELENA  
ESTABLISHED 1882

## 2021 Napa Valley Chardonnay

### Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton

#### INTRODUCTION

*Time* is the critical element in Montelena wines. It's the opposite of "best practices" in agriculture and the standardized, proverbial focus on being lean and efficient. Luxury embodies time. It's in the nature of vineyard expression over the course of an entire year, or the expression of site over the decades. A wine's maturation in barrel is delineated as a function of time, despite its inherent complexity. This, in turn, is reflected in the patience of discovery: the anticipation of a wine's future development in bottle. Most importantly, it's the time taken to savor a glass—and the moment—when it's finally opened to be enjoyed and shared.

#### VINTAGE WEATHER

A warm start to spring pushed the vines out of dormancy two weeks ahead of average and the mild weather pattern persisted through May. The light crop, coupled with ample sunshine and minimal fog through summer, accelerated ripening further and bolstered the robust flavors of the vintage. Harvest began slightly ahead of average and progressed methodically. Although yields in the vineyard were low, we're very pleased with the quality of the resulting wines.

#### NOSE

The aromatic diversity here is breathtaking. The wine cleanly and discreetly checks off all of the boxes of a great vintage. Orange blossom? Yes. Green apple? Plentiful. White peach? Absolutely. In warm years, the wines can occasionally lean too tropical in aroma, but that isn't the case here. The floral notes of chamomile and honeysuckle moderate the grandeur of the fruit but also slowly subside to unveil lemon balm, cinnamon and mint.

#### PALATE

The parade of bright, zesty fruit continues on the palate, but it's just the beginning. The wine's texture and energy are on full display, brimming with minerality, lemon curd and crème brûlée. The delicate balance between the spine of acidity and the breadth of flavor is both dynamic and fluid. The ripe melon notes are particularly captivating, lending freshness and richness. While there are some soft barrel undertones magnified by a subtle chalkiness, it will take some time before this additional layer matches the surrounding opulence.

#### FINISH

The finish initially leans exotic and tropical, first as banana and then as starfruit before slowly yielding to D'Anjou pear and baking spice. Again, the texture here is beautifully integrated but still developing. For now, it's easy enough to enjoy the candied citrus, vanilla and marzipan.

### Technical Information

#### HARVEST DATES

August 17–September 7

#### ALCOHOL

13.7%

#### BLEND

100% Chardonnay

#### BARREL AGING

10 months in French oak

#### BOTTLING DATE

August 12–18, 2022

#### WINEMAKER

Matt Crafton