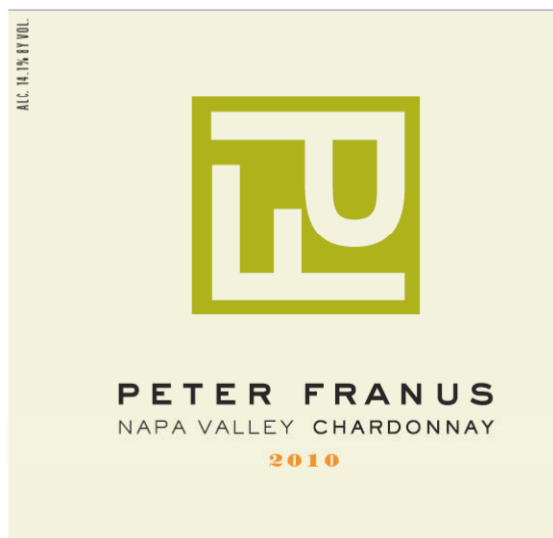


2010 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY CHARDONNAY



Vineyard:	Stewart Vineyard
Composition:	100% Chardonnay 100% Carneros Robert Young Clone
Harvest Date:	October 12, 2010
Fermentation:	Barrel fermentation 15 days at 64°
Oak aging:	100% French Oak 1/3 new 10 months
Bottling Date:	August 22, 2011
Production:	143 cases

Stewart Vineyard in Carneros has become one of my primary grape sources—and there is very good reason. The consistent quality that emerges each year is stunning. The Merlot, Albariño, and Sauvignon Blanc are topnotch. All the variables that influence grape quality—clone, soil, temperature, cultural practices, have coalesced here to make it a unique and special property. When I was offered the first tiny crop of Chardonnay in 2009, I had no idea of the style of wine that would emerge, but given my experience with Stewart, I was optimistic. I was not let down!

I often pose the question—if it's a special birthday or occasion and you have to grab a certain wine, what would it be? It would probably surprise many of you that my choice would most often be white Burgundy. Perhaps I am drawn to the elusiveness of great Chardonnay. When it realizes its potential, it offers unique flavors and aromas found in no other wine.

2010 was one of the most intriguing and unusual vintages in my 30-year career in Napa Valley. The coolest summer in decades was followed by scorching heat in August. As a result, some clusters shriveled and yields were down 10 to 15%. On the positive side, a cool, long growing season allowed great flavor development at lower sugars and wines that tend toward more elegance. We harvested the Chardonnay nearly three weeks later than the previous vintage. The tiny berries were whole-clustered pressed, settled overnight and then racked to barrel. Each barrel was inoculated with a yeast strain chosen for its ability to ferment slowly and not generate much heat, critical in barrel fermentation. The goal was to preserve aromatics and add complexity. The wine aged sur-lie for 10 months.

Our 2010 Chardonnay is remarkably consistent with the 2009. It defines the personality of the vineyard that will most likely repeat itself year after year. The wine is very light golden in color with mineral aromas—that wet-stone, gravel, non-fruity component—as well as apple, cardamom, vanilla, toasted hazelnut, basil, and a slight hint of orange peel. All components are in harmony, offering a rich yet balanced mouth. It maintains a liveliness that I seek in all of my wines, whether white or red. I keep on going back to it, looking for something else. That for me is an indication of intrigue, the element in wine that excites me the most.