

2013 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY CHARDONNAY



Vineyards:	Stewart Vineyard
Composition:	100% Chardonnay 100% Carneros Robert Young Clone
Harvest Date:	September 13, 2013
Fermentation:	Barrel fermentation 10 days at 68°
Oak aging:	100% French Oak 1/3 new 10 months
Bottling Date:	July 31, 2014
Production:	147 cases 750ml

TA 0.62 g/100 ml

pH 3.52

Alc. 14.2%

RS 0.55 g/L

CALIFORNIA RETAIL PRICE \$36

Stewart Vineyard in Carneros is the source of some of my finest grapes. 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 combined 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.

After the marvelous 2012 vintage, we were rewarded again in 2013, with a nearly perfect growing season. A warm dry spring got the vines off to an early start and also set an excellent crop. That early start translated into an early harvest as well, beginning with our Sauvignon Blanc and Albariño on August 29, followed a couple of weeks later with our Chardonnay. I call it a "leisurely" harvest, not forced to pick for fear of rain or extreme heat. When the winemaker is relaxed, so is the wine!

Grapes 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 was aged sur-lie for 10 months.

Fascinating for me is the consistency of the Chardonnays I have produced from this vineyard. That announces to me, yes, the right grape growing in the right area. Our 2013 displays a slight golden 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 and lively mouth with broad flavors that evolve on the palate. It maintains a liveliness that I seek in all of my wines, whether white or red.

I find the wine subtle, captivating, and enticing—qualities in wine that excite me the most.