

2001 Chardonnay

Columbia Valley

THE WINE

During the grape growing season, eastern Washington boasts warm summer days followed by cool nights, insuring that grapes ripen fully while retaining ample natural acidity. Our 2001 Fruit Forward Chardonnay shows that classic balance. Aromas are of pear, apple, cream, toast and butter toast, with a slight smoky note in the background. On the palate, the flavors are soft, and round, with pear and cream and a vanilla finish. This would be a great accompaniment to chicken picatta or even grilled gruyere cheese sandwiches.

THE VINTAGE AND VINEYARDS

A dry winter in 2001 allowed us to precisely control soil moisture with irrigation as we moved into a moderately warm summer and a dry harvest. Below average yields led to good concentration of flavors in all of our Chardonnay grapes. We began harvesting Chardonnay on September 6th and finished on October 1st. While our Fruit Forward Chardonnay is always a consistent blend from a number of vineyards, the majority of the grapes for the 2001 Chardonnay came from Sunnyside, Zephyr Ridge, Vista, Flying M and Rothrock vineyards.

THE WINEMAKING

Since it's important to emphasize effusive fruit character in this Chardonnay, we ferment the majority of the juice (60%) in stainless steel. That tank-fermented portion of the wine retains its crispness and fruit, while the barrel-fermented portion develops additional roundness, complexity and toast and vanilla notes. Thirty two percent of this wine underwent malolactic fermentation following primary fermentation, and all of the new wine ages sur lie (in contact with the yeast lees) for four months in both French and American oak.

THE NUMBERS

Appellation: Columbia Valley
Varietal Percentage: 100% Chardonnay
Brix at Harvest: 23.1°
TA: 0.57 g/100 ml
pH: 3.48
Alcohol: 13.5%
Release Date: September 2002

