

CHATEAU MONTELENA

Chateau Montelena's 19th century stone structure stands as a quality icon in Napa Valley, consistently producing some of the finest wines in California.



Napa Valley Chardonnay 2019

Napa Valley, California

ESTATE

Chateau Montelena's history is one of the deepest and most storied in the Napa Valley and California. Founded just north of Calistoga in 1882, it was one of the largest wineries in the state. Prohibition put an end to Montelena's winemaking, and the next major era began in 1968, when Jim Barrett purchased the estate. Jim fell in love with this exceptional property, blessed with a complex mix of soils, slopes and biodiversity of wildlife and fauna. He had a dream of creating wine at the level of the great First Growths of Bordeaux, and set about replanting the vineyard, outfitting the winery with modern equipment, and studying the processes necessary for farming and winemaking at the highest quality level.

WINE

Montelena has never changed in its philosophy of bringing the sunshine of California in a style that is structured, balanced and age worthy. In 1976, in what is now memorialized as "The Judgment of Paris," Chateau Montelena Napa Valley Chardonnay was the top-ranking wine against four white Burgundies and five other California Chardonnays in a blind tasting with a who's-who of the French food and wine industry judging. The rest, as they say, is history.

VINEYARD

Soils: Sourced from vineyards located in the south-central Napa Valley appellation, near the base of Mt. Veeder and Dry Creek Valley Road. The vineyard site, developed from old ocean terraces and alluvial fans, contains a lot of sedimentary material that gives moderate drainage and slight acidity.

Farming: Chateau Montelena is committed to sustainable farming and produces wine in their solar powered winery.

WINEMAKING

Grape Varieties: 100% Chardonnay

Fermentation: Temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks to allow the wines to ferment slowly and evenly.

Aging: 10 months in French oak barrels. Bottled August 2020.

Alcohol: 14.1% ABV

VINTAGE

Plentiful winter rains coupled with cool temperatures pushed budbreak slightly behind normal. However, the vines took full advantage of the abundant soil moisture and responded with bountiful growth as the weather warmed into June. Mild summer days with temperatures dipping into the 50s at night made for ideal ripening conditions as harvest approached on time. A shot of heat in early September pushed the early blocks over the finish line, although cool temperatures mid-month drew the Chardonnay harvest out over 18 days.

TASTING NOTES

It's the suppleness and silky mouthfeel that strike first, although there's abundant mango and citrus with Meyer lemon here as well. The minerality is chalky and distinct, a beautiful contrast that layers in with the acid adding both complexity and depth. There's slightly more wood on the transition to the finish, surfacing as baking spice and crème brûlée. However, they're handily overwhelmed by notes of Asian pear, mango and pineapple—absolutely delicious. In time, expect hazelnut and almond to appear. -Winemaker Matt Crafton