



Huber Cellars

2006 Estate Chardonnay, Barrel Fermented Sta. Rita Hills

Predictably, each morning brings maritime fog to the 20-year old Huber Vineyard in the heart of the Sta. Rita Hills appellation. Almost like clockwork, the sun will burn through the fog in the mid-morning and be followed by oceanic breezes in the early hours of the afternoon. These cool climate conditions are the result of the unique transverse nature of the appellation, with the west to east valley funneling marine influence and providing a long, cool growing season for the thin-skinned Chardonnay grape. This, combined with the old vines of the Huber estate and the sandy loam soils of the vineyard, result in a refined wine style that allows the elegant Chardonnay varietal characteristics to shine forth.

After the abundant yields of the previous year, 2006 produced a small crop of petite clusters and berries. Little rain throughout the year and a temperate and cool summer with few spikes or lows resulted in an extended growing season and almost leisurely harvest. The longer time on the vine, the reduced yields and the compact clusters and diminutive berries produced a wine that is reflective of vintage, vineyard and varietal. The grapes were whole-cluster pressed, allowed to settle and begin fermentation in stainless steel tanks and then moved to French Oak barrels to complete primary fermentation. A partial Malolactic fermentation and 20% new barrels add a layer of richness and texture to the finished wine.

Just now ready for prime time, this is a gorgeously rich, stylish and graceful wine. Lush exotic fruit on the nose are interlaced with nuances of vanilla and clove from the French oak. A silky, luxurious texture glides across the palate delivering notes of ripe pear, stone fruit and a hint of tangelo that mingle with the flinty characteristic of the vineyard. Lively acidity balances the fruit, and the finish is lasting, refreshing and demanding of a second sip. Opulent in a tasteful manner.

The 2006 Chardonnay pairs extremely well with rich seafood dishes such as scallops or crab, as well as poultry dishes with cream sauces. It is also delightful on its own as an aperitif! Serve just slightly chilled for maximum enjoyment.