

1999 Chardonnay

Labbé Vineyard

Sonoma Valley

The Vineyard: Fred Labbé's, Chateau Labbé Vineyard, is in the center of Sonoma Valley in Kenwood, just behind the Landmark Winery. This location, in this appellation, is one of the best places to grow Chardonnay in all of California. The weather in Kenwood is ideal for these grapes, warm enough to give structure and body, cool enough to give elegance and balance. Fred meticulously tends his vines, using the latest techniques: vertical-tucked cane trellising, early season leaf thinning, mid season hedging, bunch thinning at veraison, and dropping of less than optimal bunches. The result is evenly ripe fruit of optimum quality.

The Wine: The grapes were hand picked into small bins so as not to crush the fruit on the way to the winery. Whole clusters were put into the press uncrushed with stems. No pumps or augers were used. The press gently squeezes the grapes with no more pressure than a mild handshake. 40 cycles of press, deflate, turn and press were used to extract the juice. The result was a superb juice with low solids and a complete lack of bitterness associated with usual techniques.

The juice settled for three days and was then poured into barrels for fermentation. The wine completed malo-lactic fermentation while being stirred every 10 days (known as sur-leees aging). Four different yeasts were used to add additional layers of complexity. The wine was fined with bentonite for heat stability and cold stabilized before bottling; no flavor fining was needed.

well-balanced Chardonnay. Anyone tired of over-oaked, heavy-handed, highly-buttered California Chard will love this one. It has the taste of the Chardonnay grape with just a touch of well-integrated oak. It's buttery without masking the fruit. There are layers of flavor without any edges or gaps. It has roundness without any dullness and a fresh quality without being tart. It should age well and it compliments food beautifully. This is one Chardonnay you won't have to finish drinking before the meal.

Harvest & Winemaking Data:

Winemaker:	Robert Rex
Harvested:	By hand, September 20, 1999
Brix at Harvest:	21.6 Brix
Acid at Harvest:	.79g/100ml as tartaric
pH (composite):	3.36
Yeast:	Eperney II, Assemhausen, #3079 (Davis), #522
Fermentation:	100% oak barrel
Max. Fermentation Temp:	60 F
Malo/Lactic Conversion:	100%
Aging:	Sir-leees stirred every 10 days for 11 months in 100% French Oak, 36% new unfinned except for heat stability
Fining:	20 ppm free
SO ₂ at Bottling:	318 cases - August 1, 2000
Bottled:	13 %
Alcohol:	November 15, 2000
Released:	Rated 91 points by the Wine Enthusiast, winner 1 gold medals & 2 silver medals
Awards & Reviews:	

