



2005 E X S Block Seven Chardonnay Sonoma Coast

Appellation: Sonoma Coast
Varietal Blend: 100% Chardonnay
Production: 6 barrels
Winemakers: Spencer Graham
Release Date: March 1, 2007

Winemaker's Notes

Pale yellow gold. Heady aromas of toast, Burgundian 'matchstick', quince, green fig, toffee, and fresh hazelnuts intermingle over an underlying foundation of bright, tart lemon and date. On the palate, bold acidity sets the framework for sumptuous flavors of ripe peach, toasted pecan, and a flash of key lime. The wine finishes bright and clean with a hint of date and clove. Already fleshed out nicely, this wine will continue to grow in intensity, weight, and complexity over the next several years.

Winemaking

As in 2004, Block Seven Chardonnay grapes were identified and earmarked for special treatment. The cooler than usual growing season offered the opportunity to produce a Californian Chardonnay that was both laden with flavors and aromas as well as an intense, focused structure for ageing. With this in mind, we harvested these lots slightly later than usual, in order to allow the flavors to develop into a rich expression of the variety – yet with all of the vivacious and freshening natural acid still in the grapes, thanks to the mild temperatures of the season. Hand-harvested and whole-cluster pressed, portions of juice were set aside during the pressing of the fruit. This special selection of juice was fermented in select French oak barrels, then lees were carefully stirred in order to increase the roundness and weight of the wine on the palate. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered in order to bring the wine to you in its raw, natural state, the 2005 ExS Chardonnay, bold and focused, is delicious in its youth but will continue to improve in richness, depth and character for many years to come.

Vineyards

The south-facing hillside vineyards are located north of San Pablo Bay, just west of the Carneros region of Napa Valley. Cooling influences from the nearby Bay converge with those from the Pacific Coast to create a very cool, ideal microclimate.

Vintage

The 2005 growing season in Northern California was characterized by two distinct features; a spring with more rain than usual and a warm though cooler than normal summer. These two factors combined to cause the grapevines to develop their fruit gradually and evenly. By carefully managing the crop and vines, we were able to guide the Chardonnay to its characteristically rich, intense peak of ripeness without losing any of its vivacious acidity. This has resulted in a wine which is vibrant and delicious to drink now and that will continue to gain weight and intensity in the bottle for years to come.