



FOUNDERS RESERVE CHARDONNAY

VINTAGE 2020 • SONOMA COAST • ESTATE BOTTLED

OBSERVATIONS ON A NEW VINTAGE

Just when we thought a harvest could not get any more challenging – along comes 2020! The year started off with an emerging drought, then in March, Covid hit forcing us to rethink how we would continue to operate while keeping our employees safe. About the time we were getting used to our new ways of working and gearing up for harvest, August rolls in bringing with it a heat wave, freak dry lightning storms and raging wildfires. Fortunately, our vineyards were not close enough to be impacted.

Amid much uncertainty, we began our Chardonnay harvest on August 24th with fruit from Les Pierres. Another heat wave rolled in over the Labor Day weekend, but the vineyards handled the heat remarkably well. Our weather then cooled down and remained normal for the rest of the season with our harvest finishing on September 30th. Despite all the additional challenges and stress that this year brought to our winemaking efforts, 2020, just like every year before it, worked out. Best of all, we are thrilled with the quality and style of this year's vintage!

OUR ESTATE VINEYARDS

Founders Reserve is always the most intriguing wine of the vintage and crafted from select fruit of single vineyard blocks. Fruit for this vintage was provided from our Les Pierres vineyard with block B contributing 95% of the grapes.

Our southernmost estate vineyard, Les Pierres sits atop the gravelly clay loam of an ancient riverbed, thick with cobbled stones that infuse the grapes – and the wine – with a varied mineral essence. The rocks absorb sunlight and slowly release heat to the vines. When combined with the cool fog that tempers the warm Sonoma Valley temperature, the result is a long growing season that allows the fruit to ripen and reach full maturation.

ON THE WINE

Grapes were hand-harvested at night and then cooled down to preserve the fruit's fresh flavors and natural acidity. After hand-sorting, grapes were gently whole-cluster pressed to avoid bitter tannins from the skins and grape seeds. The cool, golden-green, free-run juice was then settled naturally in tanks for a few days before heading to French oak barrels for fermentation and aging. For ten months the wine was matured sur-lies in the cave-like conditions of our Grand Cru cellar in barrels that were single sourced from the Orleans Forest located in central France.

This is an extremely vibrant fruit-forward Founders showcasing the classic characteristics of Les Pierres - lemon-lime, mineral and wet stone laced with complex hints of hazelnut, white peach, and sweet oak. On the nose, you will get loads of pear, citrus/lime zest, baked apple fruit and a light mineral note. The elegant, creamy mouthfeel is balanced with bright acidity. Expressive oak components of caramel, nougat and pie crust are well-integrated with fruit flavors of Meyer lemon, Bosc pear, toasted nuts, and nutmeg. You will find the wine beautifully focused and streamlined on the palate and finely balanced with a long, lingering finish. While this vintage is ready to drink now, Founders Reserve is always a wine that enjoys time in the bottle. We recommend cellaring for one to two years.

Alcohol by Volume 14.3% • TA: 5.9gms/L • pH: 3.4 • RS: 0.5 gms/L (dry)
100% Chardonnay • 100% Malolactic • Fermentation - 100% Oak
Oak aged for a total of 16 months in one year old barrels
Vineyard- 100% Les Pierres (95% B, 3% H North, 2% EE)



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