



2004 Silver Mountain Estate Chardonnay Organically Grown

The Mount Eden Clone:

Silver Mountain's Estate Chardonnay is from the Mount Eden clone, brought from Burgundy (allegedly from one of Louis Latour's vineyards) by Paul Masson in the 1890's. Martin Ray planted the clone at his vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountains (now Mount Eden Vineyards) in the early 1940's. It was with this clone that Martin Ray revolutionized the art of winemaking in California by using noble Burgundian varietals at a time when most wine was blended from inferior varieties. Martin Ray claimed that California could produce wine as good as that from France, and indeed he proved his point. The Mount Eden clone is still grown in a few vineyards in the Santa Cruz Mountains and elsewhere, while most vineyards today have planted higher yielding varieties. The typical yield for the Mount Eden clone is only one to two tons per acre, and the vines produce fruit with tiny berries. The resulting wine, as you will see with Silver Mountain's Chardonnay, is typically characterised by intense, concentrated fruit flavors and a balanced acidity. And, unlike most California Chardonnay, this wine benefits from aging (min. 3-5 years in the bottle). The 2004 is still young (!) and will age beautifully over the next couple of years.

The Wine: 100% Chardonnay Alcohol: 14.2%

The Vineyard:

Silver Mountain's vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountains, at 2100 feet elevation overlooking Monterey Bay, enjoys the cooling and moderating influence of a marine climate, with the rugged soils characteristic of the mountains. Warm summer days are balanced by cool nights to produce longer hang time and maximum fruit flavor.

Soil: Thin topsoil of sandy loam; underlying sandy soil and sandstone.

Planted in 1980-1982

Trellising: Cordon-trained, spur pruned on vertical trellis.

Dry farmed (no irrigation).

Winemaker's Notes:

Harvest date: 27 September and 1 October, 2004

Must analysis: Brix 26.8; PH 3.36; Acid 0.82

Fermentation: Whole cluster press, juice chilled and settled before draining to barrels. Three different yeasts used for fermentation.

Barrels: 30% French, 70% Eastern European

Aging: Eleven months, with periodic stirring.

Bottling: Fined with bentonite, settled, racked, coarse filtered and bottled.

Tasting Notes:

The delicious mineral quality of Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay with refreshing acidity; apricots, vanilla and cream.

Reviews:

Yowza! This is a Chardonnay with a melodious voice with which to sing. A very well-endowed opera diva, this wine will command your attention and hold it steadfast. This wine, made from the Mount Eden clone of Chardonnay, which tends to have very small berry clusters and low yields (barely 1 to 2 tons/acre), shows what a little (summer) heat can do. Rich tropical fruits and enormous baked pear aromas truly do leap out of the glass... smells so rich and intense... On the palate, it delivers flavors of ripe, buttery apricot tart, glazed with honey and topped with lemony crème fraiche. There's rich and juicy pear, and ripe melon on the mid-palate. The finish is quite tropical, oozing with mangoes, pineapple and lots of creamy vanilla nuttiness from the wood. The wine was whole cluster pressed and fermented with three different yeasts to bring out the complexity. Eleven months of barrel age in a mix of French and Eastern European oak, with frequent lees stirring, adds to the rich and complex mouthfeel. - Laura Ness, Appellation America.

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