

ABEJA



2005 CHARDONNAY

HARVEST DATES: September 19, 2005 – September 30, 2005

VARIETAL COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay

VINEYARD SOURCES: Gamache Vineyard, Conner Lee Vineyard, Smasne Vineyard

APPELLATION: Washington State

OAK COMPOSITION: 100% French Allier and Vosges, medium toast
50% new, 50% one year old

BARREL AGING: 8 months

CHEMISTRY: Alc. 13.79%, pH 3.58, TA .56 g/100ml

BOTTLING DATE: June 27, 2006; **RELEASE DATE:** March 1, 2007

OPTIMUM TIME FOR CONSUMPTION: Through 2011

What a long, strange trip it was! The 2005 growing season started unusually wet, especially in the cooler areas where our Chardonnay is grown. The resulting high mildew pressure prevented us from harvesting all of our usual blocks. The bad news was that mother nature reduced the amount of Chardonnay we could make, but the good news was that the fruit we did harvest was really nice.

Our stylistic goal with this wine is to produce a Chardonnay with richness and complexity, a pretty elegance, bright acidity for balance, and lovely yet restrained wood characters. Creating this style begins with the selection of cool sites to grow the fruit. Just as important, we hand pick all of our fruit, and the Chardonnay is no exception. This is extremely important for preserving the delicate qualities of a white variety until it arrives to the winery. The fruit is then whole-cluster pressed, another technique used to preserve the more fragile characters of the fruit. Once gently pressed, the juice is put down to barrel for fermentation. Once fermentation is complete, each barrel is lees-stirred weekly for up to six months. Secondary fermentation with neutral strains of malolactic bacteria gives a richness to the palate while maintaining the pretty, delicate aromas on the nose.

This vintage is a little softer in overall structure than our previous Chardonnay offerings. Apricot, citrus, and ripe pear characters are framed with the pretty, clean profile and waxy texture that embodies our style.

This wine would be really complementary with seafood, and there may be nothing better than really fresh seafood, anyway. In fact, we are excited to have this luxury at a little seafood market that just opened here in Walla Walla. I like quickly poached prawns with a light aioli or warm butter. The wine's acidity will balance the richness. Our Chardonnay also works well with a chunk of halibut on the grill, or breaded and fried razor clams, which are one of my all-time favorites.

For music, Gordon Lightfoot's *Rainy Day People* would be very appropriate for the vintage. I'm also thinking of a couple of interesting covers like Jim Boggia's *Somebody to Love* and the great Tony Bennett with James Taylor doing their version of *Put on a Happy Face*.

John Abbott—*Winemaker*