

# ABEJA



2002 CHARDONNAY  
*Washington State*

HARVEST DATES: September 18–October 24  
VARIETAL COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay  
VINEYARDS: 40% Celilo, 40% Conner Lee, 20% Kestrel  
FERMENTATION: 100% Barrel fermented; Two yeast strains  
MALOLACTIC FERMENTATION: 85%  
BARREL AGING: 7 Months  
OAK COMPOSITION: 100% French; 60% New  
CASES PRODUCED: 610  
BOTTLING DATE: May 5, 2003

I have a new passion for white wine. Maybe it was four days of cycling through the vineyards of Sancerre this past summer. Or, maybe it was the chance to work with old vine Chardonnay grown in the proper climate that did it, but our first Chardonnay shows the promise of the great 2002 vintage and I am inspired by it.

For me, one of the early indicators of great quality with this varietal is an allspice character at the completion of whole cluster pressing. This reflects perfect flavor maturity in the vineyard. Then, I look for that waxy, floral character classic to the best of Chardonnays. With this vintage, it is all there. It also has aromas of flint, honey, and hint of melon.

The mouth has an exotic viscosity reminiscent of mango. This balances the acidity and oak well. This is a bright, powerful and dense Chardonnay, with richness and nice stone fruit flavors that are framed by balanced acidity. The finish is elegant with outstanding grip and length.

This Chardonnay begs for grilled sturgeon and spicy rice. It is a serious food wine, that we have found can even handle a red sauce. Try it with flash fried, boneless smelt and freshly baked bread. I am thinking simple, family food and fun.

By request, the music pairings are back. Recently, Bryan at the Cellar Door in Portland, Oregon introduced me to Steve Winwood's new disc "About Time." It is like the old Stevie, which just seems, in general, to pair well with Chardonnay. It is now a favorite in our cellar.

*John Abbott—Winemaker*

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