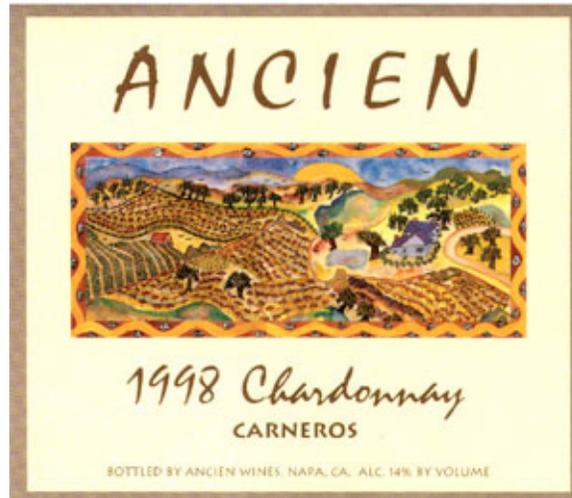


Ancien Wines

1998 Carneros Chardonnay



ABOUT THE VINEYARD...

Our Chardonnay comes from a hillside vineyard in the Carneros region of Napa Valley. The clonal selection of the vineyard is varied resulting in kind of a field blend. Most California Chardonnay comes from "certified" clones of Chardonnay made available from UC Davis. These clones produce grapes with large berries, clusters and generous crops. "Vineyard selections", on the other hand, are often a mix of clones making complex and concentrated wines. Each vineyard selection is rather unique in that different vines are selected for each propagation. The origins of the different clones within any selection sometimes date back many years and may be relatives of an originating vineyard in Burgundy. This selection is intensely floral and fruity with just a touch of muscat character.

ABOUT THE VINTAGE...

Strange year. This El Nino year provided a few surprises, such as an August rainstorm, but by and large it was very even with a cool "stretch run" that I'd love to have every year. The weather provided the opportunity for excellent development of flavors. The fruit retained above average acidity due to the cool weather that will result in slower development but will bode well for medium term ageing. The challenges were site specific, and dependent on crop level, susceptibility to botrytis (management and site dependent), and timing of ripening as well. We were fortunate to have practically no botrytis as the windy, exposed site provided the conditions to quickly dry the fruit.

ABOUT THE WINE...

The grapes were pressed as whole clusters and cold settled. The wine was then racked to barrels for fermentation. A selection of different yeasts were used for complexity. We selected a blend of two Burgundian coopers - Francois Freres and Damy - for their synergism. The former providing complex flavors of cinnamon and nutmeg spices, the latter, providing sweetness and richness in support of the fruit. The wine was then aged on its fermentation lees for the 11 months leading up to bottling. Stirring of the lees was done at each topping all the way through July - giving the wine a lush, supple texture. The wine was bottled at the end of August. Wine analysis: Alc. 14%, pH 3.36, ta 6.2 g/l. 400 cases produced.

TASTING NOTES ...

Aromatic fruit, freesia, apple, mandarin, lemon merangue, and toast characterize the exotic nose and echo through on the palate. Subtle vanillin, toasted nuts, provide complexity to the intense tropical fruit and rich, full bodied flavors. Finish is long and focused, with nice crisp acidity providing definition and balance.