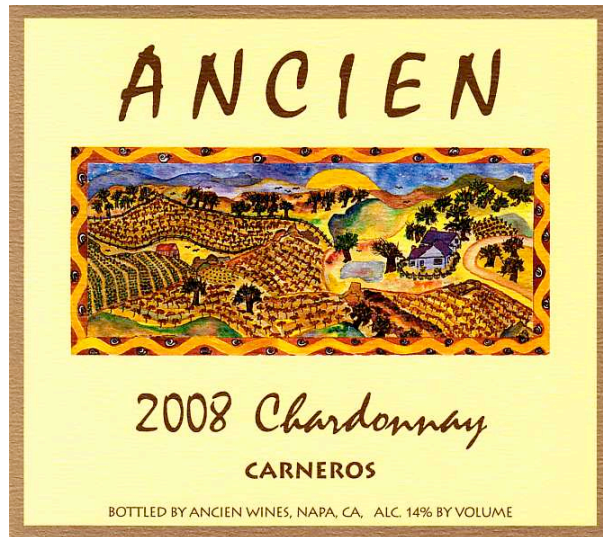


Ancien Wines

2008 Carneros Chardonnay



ABOUT THE VINEYARD...

Our Chardonnay owes its style, depth, and structure to intensely flavored, low yielding, heirloom clones growing in two Carneros vineyards: on the Napa side, the Toyon Farm and on the Sonoma side, the Sangiacomo family's Vella Ranch. We hand-selected the cuttings ourselves, from older vineyards in the Carneros area. These cuttings are reputed to have origins tracing to Paul Masson who imported them from Burgundy in the early 1940's, from none other than Louis Latour's renowned Corton Charlemagne vineyard. These selections are often referred to as "Old Wente" or "Robert Young," denoting the sourced mother blocks in the 1960s.

ABOUT THE VINTAGE...

A drier than usual winter exacerbated the existing drought conditions, and a late spring series of frosty mornings cut down the yields considerably. A summer full of warm mornings coddled the fruit as it developed and made for an earlier than average harvest. The lower yields made it possible for the vines to withstand the stress of the drought and deliver healthy, ripe fruit full of concentrated fruit flavor. The vines achieved this level of balance naturally, and what started out like a difficult year resolved itself into a solid vintage, emphasizing concentrated fruit flavors and subtle tannins. Our Chardonnay, as usual, came in after much of our Pinot Noir, with intense flavors and a high, balanced acidity. This combination has yielded a Chardonnay with tremendous structure and power, and a promise of even greater complexity with time in the bottle.

ABOUT THE WINE...

We aspire to guide our Chardonnay toward a layered, complex, and expressive style that develops gracefully in the bottle and shows enticing minerality, vivacious fruit, length and structure. For us, the watchword is balance. We pressed the grapes as whole clusters, settled and fermented entirely in French oak from three different coopers, chosen for their unique synergism and support of the fruit on the palate. Nearly half of the barrels were new. We used a variety of yeasts, including native strains, and fermentation proceeded evenly and slowly, averaging a cool 55°F. The wine was aged on its yeast lees, which were stirred weekly through the spring. 504 cases produced.

TASTING NOTES...

The nose is bold, a bit flashy even, and full of ripe melon, Asian pear, and tropical fruits. Jasmine, citrus zest and the tangy notes of meringue spice the fruitiness along with a whiff of brioche and brulee. The wine progresses into tastes and aromas of crisp apple, lychee nut, and juicy fruit flavors of pear, peach, and lime. The palate is crisp and fresh, thanks to a well-balanced acidity that lasts through to the finish and melts into this wine's signature minerality. This is a Chardonnay that welcomes an uncannily wide array of cuisines. Age will lengthen and deepen the palate, bringing out more nutty notes and the warm brioche aromas, but in its youth it already displays the balance and depth of a great white wine.

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