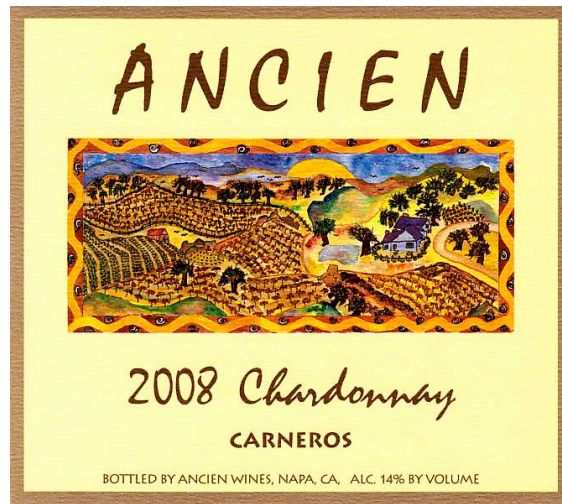


# Ancien Wines

2009 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...**

Late spring rains helped the vines to bounce back from the stress of the previous year with healthy and vigorous growth, although yields remained on the low side of average. Steady temperatures promoted even development and led to an early harvest. The fruit was in the hopper long before the unseasonably early beginning of the autumn rains. All in all, the vintage provided superior structure coupled with piquant fruit flavors and lively aromas. This wine stands, in our opinion, as one of our finest Chardonnay vintages.

## **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. 440 cases produced.

## **TASTING NOTES...**

Powerful, focused fruit announces the wine immediately. Nectarine, yellow peach, key lime, citric zest, lemon cream, and Asian pear overlay complex notes of fig, brioche, ripe melons, and cardamom. Intense palate weight and luscious fruit tannins are countered by a full, zesty acidity that lifts and carries the fruit towards the finish, layering atop the mouth-filling minerality that carries throughout the entire finish. Bright apple and pear flavors are intermixed with focused peach and citron notes. Spices, clove, cardamom, and toasty biscotti notes, liven the palate, leading into the finish which is long, layered, and complex. The tannins, minerality, and acidity that are the calling card of well-raised, true Old Wente Chardonnay are in full display. This is a wine to enjoy now, in its youth, however, its truest personality and complete depth will continue to unfold for several years to come.

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