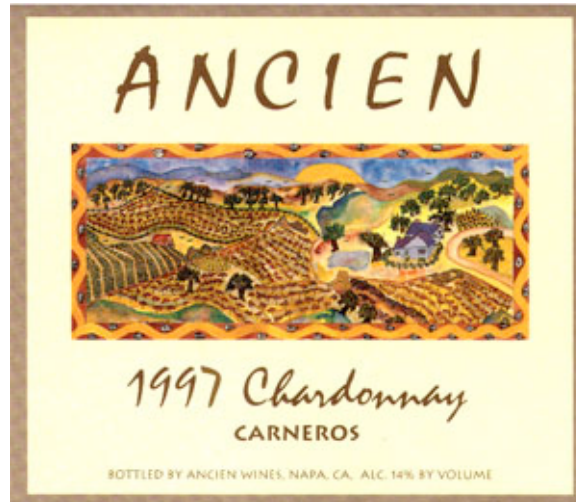


Ancien Wines

1997 Carneros Chardonnay



ABOUT THE VINEYARD...

The 1997 Chardonnay comes from a hillside vineyard in the Carneros region of Napa Valley. With excellent drainage and southwest facing slope. The site is cooler than many in Carneros as it is not sheltered from the breezes coming off of San Pablo Bay.

The clonal selection of the vineyard is varied resulting in kind of a field blend. Most California Chardonnay come 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 generally a mix of clones making complex and concentrated wines while usually cropping lower. 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...

1997 was a bit of a dicotomy, consisting of a very warm June and July and ending with a rather long, cool stretch in September - punctuated by a few short hot spells. The vineyard yields were plentiful, but the warmth carried the fruit to full ripeness earlier than usual. The grapes developed impressive flavor intensity and tended toward juicy ripe tropical fruits.

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. 14.3%, pH 3.30, ta 6.2 g/l. 325 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.

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