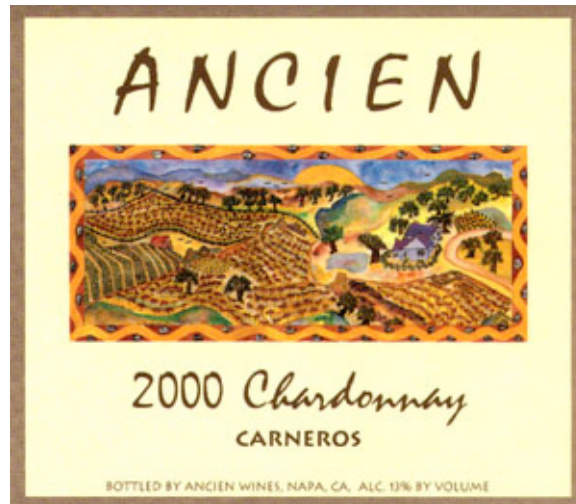


Ancien Wines

2000 Carneros Chardonnay



ABOUT THE VINEYARD...

Our fruit comes from a 28 year old block of old Wente Chardonnay from the Ferguson vineyard. The rocky soils and brisk winds conspire to make this an austere site with low vigor and very exposed vines. The resultant wines are more intensely mineral with broad texture and deep rich flavors. We continue to blend this with old Wente clone Chardonnay from Sangiacomo's Vella block.

These "old Wente" Chardonnay cuttings are reputed to have been purchased by the Wente nursery from Paul Masson who imported them from Burgundy in the early 1940s - from Louis Latour's Corton Charlemagne vineyard. We think of these selections as "heirloom" clones as they produce wines of exceptional concentration, breadth, complexity and longevity. There is less and less of this material available. As the old vineyards are replanted, few are anxious to replant to old Wente as the crop level is very low.

ABOUT THE VINTAGE...

The 2000 vintage had none of the extremes of the previous two vintages (cold 1998, colder 1999 with warm spike at the end of the season). It did have consistent moderate temperatures and a nice ripening "stretch run". Maybe we can consider it back to normal! The wines seemed a little more subtle, slightly lower in acid, and shy at the beginning but have developed in dramatic fashion. They possess excellent balance with lush forward fruit, certainly outshining the heralded 1999 vintage at release.

ABOUT THE WINE...

We gently pressed the grapes as whole clusters, settled and fermented entirely in French Oak, of which 45% was new. We used a variety of yeasts, including native yeast, and three Burgundian coopers chosen for their synergism and support of the fruit. Fermentation proceeded slowly at cool temperature, averaging 55°F. The wine was aged on its lees, which were stirred weekly through May. The wine was not raked until bottling, at which time it was moved with inert Argon gas. Malolactic fermentation was 50% complete.

Wine analysis: Alc. 13.7%, pH 3.44, ta 6.0 g/l. 600 cases produced.

TASTING NOTES...

Honeydew melon, ripe apple, ginger, freesia, and lemon aromas are echoed in the palate. Layers of baked apple, pear, and melon are framed by a flinty/mineral finish with creamy vanillin providing support to the focused finish. Nice acidity provides a refreshing balance and vibrance to the wine. Viscous in texture and opulent in its intensity, this wine will continue to develop in bottle over the next several years.

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