



2004 Chardonnay – Vineyard Select (Sonoma Coast)

This wine is a blend of two premium Sonoma County Vineyards, the Owl Ridge Vineyard and the Sweeney Vineyard. The Owl Ridge Vineyard is located in the most Northeast corner of the Green Valley area of the Russian River Valley, just outside Forestville. The vineyard is low yielding and planted with Dijon clones that produce small intensely flavored grapes. The grapes were gently whole-cluster pressed and barrel fermented. We used a combination of yeasts to add to the complexity of aromas and flavors.

The Sweeney Vineyard is located just south of Sebastopol, it is a cold climate, high acid producing vineyard. To maximize crispness, the majority of the juice was tank fermented and kept under 65 degrees. This brings forward crispness and a hint of lemon rind characters in the wine. The resulting blend offers aromas of ripe fruit and oak, while maintaining a lively quality on the palate.

Harvest was conducted in the period from September 30 to October 16. The sky was clear and the air was soft and warm. The fruit was harvested by hand, sorted in the field and sorted again in the winery.

During fermentation, winemaker Joe Otos achieved maximum extraction of flavors, aromas and body while working to keep the wine balanced. The resulting wine is intense, but elegant.

After fermentation, the wine was barrel-aged in 100% premium French oak with 30% new barrels, principally tight-grained oak from the Allier and Bertrages forest. While the wine is enjoyable now, we think it will keep well for several years.

Only 304 cases were produced. The alcohol content is 14.2%.

It won a **Double Gold Medal** at the **2006 Florida State Fair International Wine Competition** and **Gold Medals** at the **2006 Pacific Rim International Wine Competition** and the **2006 North of the Gate Wine Competition**.

Both components of this wine were proven outstanding vineyard designates, so we could have bottled them as such. However, during blending trials, we found that the combination was so astounding that we had to create the designation Vineyard Select for the 2004 Chardonnay. We decided to release it while we still had stock of the 2003 Chardonnay – Sweeney Vineyard because the characters of the two Chardonnays are so different and this creates a set of interesting choices for our customers.

Joseph C. Otos, Winemaker