

2016 Division Chardonnay “Un”

Willamette Valley AVA

A return to cool climate greatness! After two uncharacteristically and record setting consecutively hot and dry years that began during the summer of 2014, the spell finally relented in the late spring of 2016. Yes, the warm 2015/2016 winter meant an early start to the 2016 season in March, but the key months from flowering to harvest were nearly textbook perfect conditions for growing world class Chardonnay, and we couldn't be more excited! We know that the Pacific Northwest and world around us is changing due to global climate heating, which will invariably effect the way we farm and even what we farm in the Willamette Valley for decades to come, but we're more than pleased for a vintage like 2016 and believe you will be too!

We are once again very pleased that our Chardonnay cuvee has an ample representation from the amazing, but very finite number of, old vine sites, including our Eola Springs Mendoza clone block and a new to us site in the Southern Willamette called Dell'Ucello (originally planted in the mid-80s for sparkling wine). We also continue to work with our favorite Biodynamic site, Johan Vineyards, as well as Methven Family Vineyards in the Eola-Amity Hills. The vintage was perfect for the old vine sites, which sometimes struggle to ripen in cooler years. They were both dense and flavorful, but still nervy and vibrant at the core, not mention in perfect health! The two Dijon sites were thankfully less ripe than in 2015 and really shined this year in a way they had not in the two very warm previous years.

Like in 2015, we utilized the pied de cuve (vineyard native yeast cultivation) build up, a technique that we had been using for some of the red ferments and now use for nearly all of our ferments. The method resulted in fantastic success for the Chardonnay sites this year, which led to a gorgeously complex final wine that did not struggle to complete primary fermentation. The fermentations were long and cool in our first new Austrian oak barrel, several neutral French oak Burgundy barrels, as well as one new French "Aquaflex" barrel, a water bent barrel designed to restrain oak flavor impact without losing valuable tannin and numerous compounds that enhance structure and elegance. As typical with cool in barrel fermentations, they take a while, but in 2016, we were surprised to find everything that finished primary fermentation by March of 2017. The wines completed the secondary malolactic fermentation by late spring of 2017 and for the first time ever for us, we were able to avoid sulfite additions to all but two barrels until just before bottling - something we think dramatically increased the complexity of this wine.

The 2016 Chardonnay “Un” is a return to the more acid driven style we prefer from this glorious grape. The aromatics are a nice balance of stone fruit, like peach, as well as fragrant flowers and the ever present saline notes we typically notice in our Chardonnay. The palate is electric with clear fresh pear, peach and light mineral characteristics. The 2016 Division Chardonnay “Un” is not as rich as the prior vintage and is more balanced with acidity, but with phenolic flavor depth. We are very pleased with the vintage and believe the wine is both ready to drink and ready to age for a few years!

Alc - 13.0%, pH 3.29, 175 cases

