

THE
STEVEN KENT
WINERY

2009 “Merrillie” Chardonnay
LIVERMORE VALLEY

The 2009 vintage produced two distinctive Chardonnay releases under our *Merrillie* banner. This second release is differentiated from the first release in one major way: the barrel regime employed was 100% American oak. Of the 14 barrels chosen for inclusion in this blend, approximately 60% were new barriques (the staves were air-dried for three years before they were made into barrels, thus the harsher tannins in the wood were leached out and what tannin was left adds wonderful structural notes to the wine). The fruit for this wine was harvested from a block of Chardonnay containing one of the older Wente clones and exhibits ripe, firm pear notes in the nose and round citrus flavors. Undergirding the fruit are aromas associated with wood: vanilla, subtle caraway seed and toasted coconut flakes. Though on the lees for the same amount of time as our smaller *Landucci Block* release, this wine currently shows more round fruit and less of the toasted nut/freshly baked bread of the French oak used exclusively in the Landucci Block wine.

The 2009 vintage of Merrillie Chardonnay, Livermore Valley, is very much a wine of its vintage. Generally seen as less austere in its fruit presentation than 2008, this wine is much more reminiscent of the 2007 release, another vintage that emphasized a broader, more fruit forward entry and less mid-palate tannin. As the wine warms in the glass, it readily shows its elegant aromatic makeup and the tannins are evident mostly on the finish. This is a beautifully *shaped* wine...all the elements of world-class Chardonnay are present: fine and manifold flavors and aromas, silkiness of mid-palate, length of finish...and each is showing in great proportion. Because of the wine's composure, I expect it to be evolving positively for at least 5-7 years.

After fruit was pressed off, the must was transferred to stainless steel tanks where it settled for about 48 hours prior to fermentation. The must was then transferred to barrel where it underwent both primary and secondary (malo-lactic) fermentation. The wines was aged sur lie for 16 months. The 2009 Merrillie was bottled without filtration or fining.

Only 213 cases of this wine were produced.

HISTORY

Merrillie is named for my paternal grandmother, and until recently, was the only white wine produced at the Steven Kent Winery. The first vintage, produced in 1999, came from the Folkendt Vineyard. The DeMayo Vineyard provided fruit for Merrillie through the 2004 vintage, and the Ernest Wente Vineyard is our new source. Though there are clonal differences and soils and exposures vary, the impeccable balance of this wine remains unchanged.

VINTAGE

Harvest Date: September 22, 2009

Fruit: Fruit from the Livermore Valley, 100% Wente Clone, harvested around 24.5° Brix.
Alcohol 14.5%.

Fermentation: After destemming and crushing the fruit was left to settle in stainless steel for 48 hours before it was put into oak barrels. Primary and secondary (Malo-lactic) fermentation were done under cool temperatures in barrel. This wine was bottled without filtration or fining.

Aging: Aged in 100% American oak (60% new) for 16 months.

Time in Barrel: 16 months

Release Date: January 1, 2012

VINEYARD

Location: Sourced from a site situated about 1.5 miles west of the Winery.

Soil: Sandy loam and clay.

Training: Vertical Shoot Position (VSP) trellising method.