



2012 "Merrillie" Chardonnay

LIVERMORE VALLEY

THE STEVEN KENT WINERY

2012 marks the fifth vintage of fruit from the Landucci Block of Chardonnay, planted here in the Livermore Valley. This block, bearing my grandmother's maiden name, is planted to one of the older Wente clones. The first varietally-labeled Chardonnay was made from Wente clone fruit, and many of the most sought after clones in California (Robert Young, Hyde Selection) are children of Wente clone material.

The 2012 vintage, unlike the preceding three, was nearly perfect for grape growing. Temperate weather, with few heat spikes in July and August, led to nearly ideal temperatures at harvest. The 2012 Merrillie's wonderful balance of richness and finesse is, in part, due to the fine season. The pear and lemon curd notes are abundantly rich, and maybe less restrained than the cooler 2011 and 2010 releases. On entry, the wine has wonderful viscosity through the mid-palate and warm notes of French and American oak barrel. The wine finishes with wonderful focus and length. This small-lot Chardonnay was aged in 60% new French oak barrels for 8 months. Given the age-worthiness of Merrillie coupled with somewhat primary fruit of the wine now in its youth, I would recommend waiting 6-12 months to start drinking; the wine should age beautifully for 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 wine was aged *sur lie* for 8 months.

504 cases were produced in this vintage.

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 28, 2012

Fruit: Fruit from the Landucci Block, harvested around 25.0°. Alcohol 14.7%.

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: This wine was aged in American and French oak barrels (60% new, 40% second-use).

Time in Barrel: 8 months

Production: 504 cases

Release Date: August 30, 2013

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.