



2004 WILLAMETTE VALLEY CH

BACKGROUND This wine is a first-time production for us, and the latest addition to our growing line of creative white wines, our “wacky whites”. Having been the leader in bringing the clones from Burgundy (“Dijon” clones) that reinvented Oregon Chardonnay, we remain firm believers in the quality of the Chardonnay variety. With a traditionally crafted Chardonnay remaining in our lineup of wines, our venture into an “un-oaked” style allows a new opportunity to experience the potential of Chardonnay grapes grown in Oregon’s unique climate.

GROWING SEASON It was a crazy year for grape growing! A stretch of warm weather in February jump-started the vines, so bud break occurred on March 29th, much earlier than usual. A combination of factors – a touch of frost, a tiny critter that caused “short shoot syndrome”, and bad weather at bloom – took care of crop thinning for the year with no human intervention necessary. June, July, and much of August were incredibly hot, so we were not totally displeased by our heaviest August rain storm in a couple decades. A nice period of dry weather then lingered, beginning in mid-September, allowing the flavors to mature coolly and fully before harvest.

VINEYARDS The three Yamhill County vineyards in this blend – Quarter Mile Lane Vineyard and Bryan Creek Vineyard in the Chehalem Mountains, and Stoller Vineyard in the Dundee Hills – are all on basaltic-origin, clay-loam soils. These soils are capable of holding enough water to support grapevines through our annual summer drought, thus insuring the development of intense fruit flavors.

WINEMAKING Gentle, whole-cluster pressing separated the juice from the skins of the Chardonnay grapes chosen for this wine. The juice was pumped to stainless steel tanks for a cool temperature fermentation process, and the wine was bottled in April of 2004. The style of winemaking we’ve chosen for the “CH” – cool temperature, stainless steel fermentation – leaves the pure fruit characteristics of the variety to shine through, showing you what Chardonnay tastes like without adornment from oak and malolactic (secondary) fermentation.

THE WINE Although not made in typical Chardonnay style, the stone fruit flavors, richness and minerality that are the hallmark of traditional Chardonnay are surely present in this wine. Rich and silky with no flavors hidden under oak, the CH sends hints of peaches and sweet pea blossoms and finishes with a touch of refreshing citrus zest. Pair with cream-sauced chicken, salmon, or your shellfish of choice.

THE LABEL Just as we went with an abbreviation in naming our “TF” (Tocai Friulano), we’re calling this wine “CH.” However, in this case it was not done because of label law technicalities, but to mitigate confusion – “Chardonnay” on the label might create the expectation of a wine that tastes quite different than what you find in the bottle. The label drawing is of the vineyard at our winery in late summer by Portland artist, Bob Bredemeier.

PRODUCTION There were 489 cases of 12/750 ml bottles of 2004 CH produced.

