



2016 Napa Valley Chardonnay, Linda Vista Vineyard

In 2011 we leased the old Chardonnay vineyard behind our house. The West Oak Knoll area where we live is one of the classic Chardonnay spots in Napa, going back to the 60s, when the climate here was considered too cool for full-bodied reds. The cool winds and clay soils here preserve zesty acidity and freshness, while the Napa sun provides richness and ripeness. Leasing the vineyard and farming it ourselves gave us the control to feel comfortable producing a challenging and iconic variety like Chardonnay, where crafting "balance" means walking a razor's edge in a genre with such iconic examples.

For complexity, completeness, and balance, we achieved a diversity of ripeness by harvesting the fruit several different times during the ripening period. The earlier harvests contributed acidity and minerality, and the later harvests contributed flesh and richness. The earliest pick is incredibly zingy, while the latest pick is nutty and honeyed. Everything was blended together before bottling. We whole-cluster pressed all of the grapes, settled in tank for 24 hours, then fermented and aged the wine in seasoned French oak barrels. To preserve the high-toned and citrusy notes we kept half the barrels unstirred, and for a touch of creaminess we stirred the other half of the barrels just once. We allowed two-fifths of the barrels to go through malo-lactic fermentation. The wine was never racked, fined, or cold-stabilized, but since it is partially ML negative it was filtered before bottling.

2016, similar to 2015, was a warm early year, and the wine is riper and richer than previous vintages of Linda Vista, which we think is a good thing given the steely character of the vineyard. The moderate alcohol and mouthwatering acidity that is a trademark of that vineyard is still very much present, but some of the typical Linda Vista lemon oil has been replaced by a riper luscious creaminess.

The pH is 3.34, the TA is 7.7 g/l, and the alcohol is 12.8%. 2831 cases produced.

With Golden Delicious apples, yellow peaches, musk melon, and honey on the nose and through to the palate, the medium acidity is balanced by pleasant fleshiness, finishing very clean with a hint of minerality. Refreshing and with moderate alcohol, this wine is all about pleasure, begging to be drunk up, with some oysters or a roast chicken and a big smile.