



2004 CAITLIN'S RESERVE CHARDONNAY

BACKGROUND As the winemakers of the Oregon wine renaissance re-established vinifera grapes in the 1960's and 1970's, the wine regions of Northern Europe (especially Burgundy and Alsace) provided their models. However, the only legal place to get grapevines was California. When it came to Chardonnay, the choices were three late-ripening selections - Draper, Wente, and 108 - all selected for warmer climates than Oregon's. Though some fine wines were produced, autumn rainstorms frequently arrived before these selections were fully ripe. While working in Burgundy in 1974, David Adelsheim saw that Chardonnay there ripened at the same time as Pinot noir, not two-to-three weeks later as in Oregon. So, at his (and others') urging, Oregon State University imported a number of Chardonnay clones from Burgundy during the years 1977 to 1988, and starting in 1989, these "Dijon" clones were released to growers. Today, the resulting wines have entirely different flavors than those of the old California selections; they are, in fact, much more like those of white Burgundy.

GROWING SEASON It was a bit of a crazy year in the vineyard. Warm weather in February jump-started the vines, causing bud break to occur 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 very hot, but our heaviest August rain storm in a couple decades brought that to an end. A nice stretch of dry weather, beginning in mid-September, allowed flavors to mature coolly and fully just before picking. The grapes for this wine were picked on October 1st and 2nd.

VINEYARDS The 2004 Caitlin's Reserve consists of early-ripening "Dijon" clones planted on two vineyards with deep, basaltic-origin, clay-loam soils, ideally suited to ripening these French clones of Chardonnay. Eighty percent comes from Stoller Vineyard in the Dundee Hills (Clone 76). This vineyard is situated at the south edge of the Red Hills of Dundee, one of the north Willamette Valley's most respected viticultural areas. Ranging in elevation from 300-600 feet above sea level, the vineyard's southeast-to-southwest exposure has reminded vintners from Burgundy of the hill of Corton. Clone 352 from our Bryan Creek Vineyard provided the remainder of the blend. This estate vineyard sits at an elevation of 700+ feet on the Chehalem Mountains and has direct southern exposure.

WINEMAKING To produce this wine, we used the same 'barrel-centric' winemaking that has always been employed by the top Burgundy producers. Following a gentle, whole-cluster pressing to separate the juice from the skins as quickly as possible, the juice was transferred to small French oak barrels, of which 25% were new, medium-toast, Vosges- and Allier-origin wood. After undergoing primary and malolactic fermentations, the lees of the wines were stirred every two weeks to add complexity. Sur lie aging for 15 months allowed the Chardonnay and oak flavors to meld, and for the oak tannins to elongate, thereby softening and rounding the wine. After being racked from barrel, the wine was bottled on August 30, 2005.

THE WINE The 2004 bottling offers a lovely bouquet of zesty sweet lemons, hazelnuts and spice, with an elegant touch of French oak. The wine holds layers of complex, yet focused flavors of citrus and minerals, beautifully balanced acidity, and a long, smooth finish. The oak flavors and mild tannins are perfectly poised. This Chardonnay will pair beautifully with poached salmon, lobster, smoked meats and cheeses, and spicy dishes.

THE LABEL The label portrait by Ginny Adelsheim is of Caitlin Wells, the daughter of Ginny's lifelong friend, Connie Kiener. Both Connie and Caitlin lived at our Quarter Mile Lane vineyard house in the late 1970's. At age five, Caitlin was making change at our open-house tastings. She's now a pediatric nurse in Portland with a daughter of her own.

THE QUANTITY Total production of the 2004 Caitlin's Reserve Chardonnay was 1,812 bottles (750ml), released in cartons of six.

