



2021 FEL CHARDONNAY, ANDERSON VALLEY

Vintage

The 2021 vintage was marked most notably by lack of water. While this produced anxiety about the potential for frost damage and summer growing conditions, the drought had a silver lining: excellent concentration. Yields tended to be down, producing overall smaller clusters and berries. As a result, high skin-to-juice ratios set the stage for exceptional flavor and texture in our wines. Despite the dry winter, budbreak started slightly later than usual and the vineyards enjoyed a steady and moderate summer, notably free of major heat events until the start of September. After a push of heat, our vineyards were harvested in remarkably quick succession. The 2021 wines are reminiscent of the excellent 2015 vintage, easily one of the best of the last decade for FEL.

Vineyards

This Chardonnay is a blend of multiple Heritage clones and Dijon selections. The primary source is multiple blocks from the vaunted Ferrington Vineyard, from which we also produce vineyard-designated Chardonnay and Pinot Noir bottlings, as well as the Hein Vineyard in the “Deep End” of Anderson Valley.

Winemaking

The fruit was harvested in two picks on September 2nd and September 14th at an average of 23° Brix, then whole-cluster pressed to tank. Fermentation occurred in neutral French oak barrels to provide richness and body while showcasing the purity of the variety and the excellent vineyard sources. The absence of malolactic fermentation preserves the wine’s freshness and acidity. The wine was aged *sur lie*, without stirring, for ten months.

Winemaker Notes

This juicy, zesty Chardonnay captures the essence of the Anderson Valley vineyards we love. The abundant aromatics range from the fruit characters of nectarine, pomelo, and peach pit to a more savory edge of juniper berry, fennel pollen, and carrot cake. The palate is taut and bright, with lemon peel, melon flesh, and a lingering citrus blossom prettiness.

Analysis

Alcohol: 13.5%

Bottling Date: July 18, 2022

Release Date: April 1, 2023