

2020 Mount Eden Chardonnay, Estate Bottled, Santa Cruz Mountains

History

Mount Eden Vineyards is a small historic wine estate perched at 2000 feet overlooking Silicon Valley in the Santa Cruz Mountain Appellation, about 50 miles south of San Francisco. Founded in 1945, it is recognized as one of the original “boutique” California winery properties, focusing on small lots of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. Mount Eden’s lineage of estate bottled Chardonnay and Pinot Noir is the longest in California. Planted in austere, infertile Franciscan shale on a cool exposed mountaintop, these low-yielding estate vineyards have consistently produced world-class wines for over seventy years.

Winemakers notes at release: Fall 2023

Drought returned for our 2020 vintage and is forever on our minds. We dry farm here, and water, or the lack thereof, is always a concern. The new normal in these warm, dry years is accelerated ripening; we completed our Chardonnay harvest by the end of August.

Classic aromas of citrus, honeysuckle and a nuance of hazelnut are abundant. Focused acidity and linear flavors of lemon, cardamom and minerality come through on the palate.

Of course, this Chardonnay is extremely enjoyable now, but aging in a good cellar for ten years will bring its own reward.

The Santa Cruz Mountains AVA

Mount Eden’s larger home is the Santa Cruz Mountain Appellation. It is America’s first mountain AVA—recognized in 1981—with winegrowing dating back to the 1860s.

The appellation encompasses the Santa Cruz Mountain range, with boundaries defined by the elevation of the fog levels at daybreak in the spring and summer months, typically between 400 feet on the western side and 800 feet on the east.

The region is planted to approximately 1300 acres of vineyards, of different varietals and soil types. The wines come from high-altitude, small vineyard lots—surrounded by native chaparral and, in some locations, Redwood trees—growing atop ancient seabed. These growing conditions give the wines a distinct character and regional identity.



The Vineyard:

Acreage: 15.21

Average Age of Vines: 27 years

Clones: Mount Eden

Training: Vertical shoot positioning

Spacing: 3 X 8

Soils: Franciscan Shale

Reviews

95 points *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*

94 points *Wine & Spirits Magazine*

90 points Antonio Galloni presents *Vinous*



Winemaking and Technical Data

Rain Total 2020 Season: 20.6 inches

Yield: 1.5 tons per acre

Harvest Dates: August 21st—26th hand harvested

Brix: 23.2°

pH: 3.3

TA: 8.5

Fermentation: 100% natural primary and secondary (malolactic) barrel fermentation

Barrels: 100% barrel aged in new and one-year-old French Oak

Aging: 10 months, *sur-lie*

Bottled: July 2021

Alcohol: 14%

Cases produced: 935 cases-750ml, 40 cases-1500ml

Talking Points for Presentation

The Estate Chardonnay grapes are harvested when slightly yellow to yellow-green and pressed without crushing. All of the juice is barrel-fermented in French Burgundy barrels, where the wine undergoes full malolactic fermentation and is aged on the *lees* for ten months before being lightly filtered prior to bottling. The Chardonnay is then cellared for two years before being released for sale.

The full-bodied Estate Chardonnay displays fine underlying acidity, minerality and a long finish. Many vintages are still fresh and enjoyable after fifteen years, explaining why Mount Eden Estate Chardonnay is considered one of California's longest-lived white wines.