2021 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 2024

The 2021 growing season here at Mount Eden was a nail-biter. A meager 12 inches of rain fell, the lowest recorded at this site since at least 1943, when our founder, Martin Ray, first came to this mountaintop.

Every wine region has something weather-related to worry about: summer rain/ hail in France, winter kill in Washington State, or the specter of drought in California. Everyone who makes wine thinks about the weather and how it will affect the grapes, for good or bad. Given the drought, harvest was early, late August into September, and overall, it was a success.

Our signature style is directed by what happens in the vineyard, with minimal intervention once the wine is in the barrel; this gives our Estate Chardonnay a classic restraint and longevity.

The nose is complex, with lemon, savory herbs, and a slight touch of yeast. The palate has great acidity, with abundant stone fruit flavors and a lingering finish.

Anticipate a delightful evolution over the next 15 years.

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

The heritage of Mount Eden Chardonnay dates back to the 1890s, propagated from a Burgundian selection grown in the original Paul Masson vineyard. The story goes that Masson was friends with the La Tour Family and received cuttings of both Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from their finest Burgundy Vineyards. The fruit and vines of this selection are distinct from other Chardonnay "clones" used in California, and by the mid -1970s, UC Davis had declared our vines *the Mount Eden Clone*. The present-day Estate Chardonnay vines were planted using cuttings taken from these vines. That is why we say we have the longest lineage of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in North America.

Acreage: 15.21

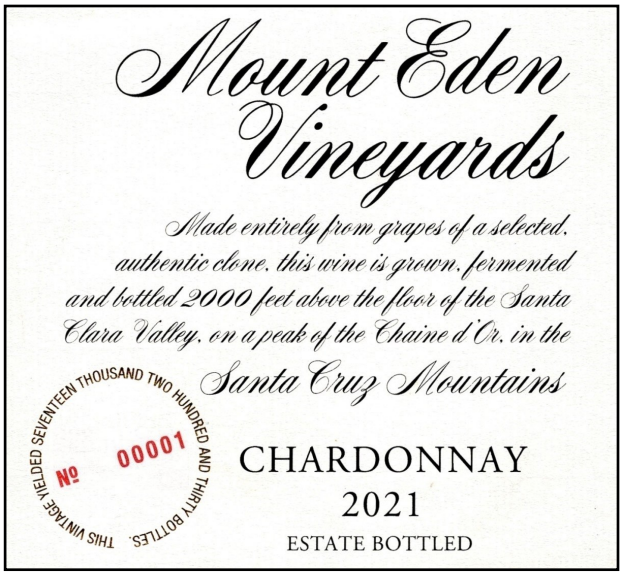
Average Age of Vines: 27 years

Clones: Mount Eden

Training: Vertical shoot positioning

Spacing: 3 X 8

Soils: Franciscan Shale



Winemaking and Technical Data

Rain Total 2021 Season: 12.7 inches

Yield: 2.5 tons per acre

Harvest Dates: August 23rd—September 1st hand harvested

Brix: 23.5°

pH: 3.33

TA: 7.5

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 2022

Alcohol: 14%

Cases produced: 1,423 cases-750ml, 40 cases-1500ml

Talking Points for Presentation

The Estate Chardonnay grapes are harvested when slightly yellow to yellow-green and pressed to tank. All of the juice is then 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.

Reviews

96 points *JebDunnuck.com*
94 points *Wine Advocate*
94+ points *Vinous*
93 points *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*
93 points *Decanter*
92 points *Wine Spectator*