2020 Estate Chardonnay
Chehalem Mountains AVA

Willamette Valley, Oregon

Chardonnay production at Colene Clemens began in 2013 with purchased fruit. We have since planted just shy of 7 acres on the upper crest of the property, and our chardonnay is now sourced entirely from our estate fruit. Over the course of 11 months in barrel, we strive to build texture, flavor, and body from the lees and barrel time, creating a wine that is supple and layered with firm underlying acidity. This wine is rich and indulgent, with a gorgeous gold hue. The aromatics exude tropical fruit with hints of pear and vanilla bean. On the palate this wine is full and plush, carrying through the tropical notes from the nose, alongside lemon peel and a touch of spice. Drink this wine on its own or pair with creamy cheeses, manchego, or seafood.

WINEMAKING: Comprised of Dijon 76 & 95, the fruit is hand-picked and sorted before being gently pressed and cold settled, then barreled down. This vintage, we brought together a blend that is 25% new oak via 500 liter puncheons, 45% used French oak, and 30% stainless steel. Both primary and malolactic fermentation occur in barrel, while the wine is aged on its fine lees with minimal stirring for 11 months before being blended and bottled in March of 2022.

SRP: $40 | 708 cases produced.

— COLENE CLEMENS VINEYARDS —

Colene Clemens was founded in 2005 by Joe and Victoria Stark with the express purpose of making exceptional pinot noir, and named the property in honor of Victoria's mother. Wine production began in 2008, and Winemaker & Vineyard Manager Stephen Goff has been dedicated to the development and planting of the vineyard as well as the production of our stunning wines since the very beginning.

— THE ESTATE —

Spanning 122 acres where the Chehalem Mountains converge with Ribbon Ridge, the estate contains both sedimentary soils from the Wellsdale & Hazelaire series, and volcanic soils from the Witzel series. Elevation climbs from 350 to 650 feet, where the winery perches with sweeping views of the coast range and valley. 62 acres are planted to pinot noir & chardonnay. The vineyard is completely dry farmed, and we take a pragmatic approach to viticulture: we use sustainable and organic processes whenever possible. We are firm believers in taking care of our soil, practicing crop reduction for low yields and improved quality, and hand harvesting our fruit at its optimal physiological ripeness for maximum flavor and intensity.

— THE VINTAGE —

With an average to slightly late budbreak, the early part of the season was relatively dry and warm. No early season frosts were encountered, and the overall growth and development was quite good. Despite all the sunny early season weather, forecasts took a dip in mid-June just as we were entering flowering. Two weeks of damp, cloudy weather resulted in a very poor fruit set, which reduced our yields naturally by a solid 35%! While the reduction in crop was disappointing, it also had some upsides regarding quality as the small cluster and berry size typically result in greater fruit intensity and structure. The remainder of the growing season remained warm and dry but not excessively hot. Then came the smoke. What we know is that there are many factors that play into its overall impact. Proximity to the source is of course key, wind direction and air currents as well as the maturity level of the fruit at the time of exposure also come into play. While some of our colleagues were much closer and more directly affected, we feel that the impact to our wines was minimal. While the conventional wisdom of the moment advocated for lighter extraction and reduced use of new oak, we held to our traditional protocols. Interestingly enough, after time to analyze the results, the conventional wisdom of the industry has since shifted in favor of the more traditional approach that we employed. The resulting wines have good extraction, solid structure, fruit intensity, and ample ripeness. There is a rich core of medium to dark red fruit, and good fruit sweetness in the finish that is very pleasing.