

La Clarine 'Chardonnay' 2019

Producer: Hank Beckmeyer and Caroline Hoël

Provenance: Sierra Foothills, California

Farming: Organic

Grape(s): 100% Viognier

Vineyard(s): Rorick Heritage Vineyard (Forlorn Hope) is a limestone rich, natural amphitheater in Calaveras County.

Vintage: Hank writes: "Beautiful, easy, lovely harvest. Everything went right. It

was a remarkably unremarkable vintage that seems to have made really remarkable wines.

Fermentation/ Aging: Whole cluster pressed into flex tank for spontaneous fermentation and aging without battonage or racking until shortly before bottling.

Fining/ Filtration: none.

Sulfite: added and crush and/ or bottling depending on need

Misc: 2020 is the second vintage for this Chardonnay and Hank considers it to be the better rendition writing: "I think we got the picking just right, nice acidity and a nice richness that makes chard chard."



The Producer:

If wine writer Terry Theise's notion that distinctiveness as precondition for greatness is correct, La Clarine Farm is certainly primed for immortality. The La Clarine wines are teeming with life in a way that separates them from even the most lively of French natural producers. Self-proclaimed refugees from the music business, Hank Beckmeyer and Caroline Hoël began the project thinking they'd try a few things and if people liked it, they'd continue. Recovering biodynamic farmers, they have evolved from Steiner's method of rigorous input to Fukuoka's method of careful observation. Although they purchase the majority of their fruit, Hank writes about the quantum entanglement of vineyard, winery and winemaker; a cellar-inclusive addendum to the conception of terroir. The La Clarine wines are bottled inquiries, cloudy with curiosity and a bursting state of vivacious play that makes them a joy to drink and endlessly fascinating.

The Vineyard:

The Chardonnay is grown at Rorick Heritage Vineyard, a recent acquisition of Forlorn Hope. It is an encyclopedic, high elevation vineyard in the form of a steep amphitheater full to brim with a grab bag of quirky grapes. 20 varieties were planted by the first owner Barden Stevenot, many in the early 2000's, with another 10 now in production under Matthew's stewardship to be followed by 10-15 additional varieties currently in the nurseries.

The particular combination of limestone and schist as well as a treasure trove of fascinating grapes has made RHV a household name among the artisan winemakers of California. Folks like Evan Lewandowski, Michael Cruse and Chad Hinds (Method Sauvage) have all found themselves drawn in by the promise of Trousseau, Picpoul, Tempranillo and even ungrafted Chardonnay!

Of the vineyard Hank writes: “ the voice of the vineyard speaks loudly. All the wines I’ve made from there (Albariño, Tempranillo and Chardonnay) display a unique set of flavors and textures, quite unlike any other vineyard I’ve worked with in the Foothills.”

The Winery:

Hand harvest fruit was whole cluster pressed to Flextank for spontaneous fermentation and aged on the lees without battonage or racking until shortly before bottling the summer following harvest. Depending on the particular wine, sulfite will be added at crush and/ or bottling. No fining or filtration.

For more details email info@OlmsteadWine.com

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