

VINTAGE 2023



PULIDO-WALKER

Chardonnay

MT. VEEDER ESTATE VINEYARD

The best growing seasons are the ones that give us the least to talk about: no dramas or unwelcome surprises, just smooth sailing from bud break to harvest. After a string of challenging years, 2023 was that kind of blessedly uneventful season across the Napa Valley.

It began with above-average rainfall—over 12 inches in January, and another 10 in March—replenishing reservoirs and erasing drought conditions. Bud break came on the later side due to all that rain, but the trade-off was a few extra weeks of hang time on the other end. We typically harvest the fruit in August, but with the later start and consistently mild summer temperatures, we let the clusters hang until after Labor Day. The extra time on the vine allowed the fruit to fully develop without losing acidity or accumulating excess sugar.

That was the real gift of the 2023 season: we had the luxury of taking our time. We tasted the fruit periodically, ran our analyses, and harvested the estate vineyard blocks at our leisure, with everything at 22.5 to 23 Brix.

The musts were lower in sugar but retained the same acidity as if we had harvested much earlier. There were no problematic fermentations. Malolactic fermentation was easy to manage. The resulting lots showed excellent varietal and site character. In short, it was a great deal of fun making these wines. We were due for a year of 100% joy!

Winemaking & Tasting Notes

Tasting through the individual wine lots, we were impressed by virtually everything this vineyard gave us in 2023. We chose six Wente barrels, six Montrachet, and four Robert Young for the final blend of 2023 Pulido-Walker Estate Chardonnay, a wine with full expression of cut, freshness, and citrus fruit.

Once again, the Wente brings a particular rich quality that gives the wine substance without heaviness, and is nicely balanced by acidity. The Montrachet has all the prettiness we've come to expect from that clone—beeswax, lanolin, pressed flower—but just a little of it in the blend lets the wine maintain dimension. The Robert Young gives classic, high-toned Chardonnay elements like sea spray and honeysuckle. As ever, the sum is significantly greater than any one of these individual parts, amplifying a dynamism and freshness that is truly thrilling.

The 2023 Pulido-Walker Estate Chardonnay is the best yet that we've seen from this mountaintop site, and only heightens our expectation for vintages to come as the vineyard continues to mature.

THOMAS RIVERS BROWN
Winemaker

Data

Estate Grown

Varietal: 100% Chardonnay

Clones: Montrachet, Robert Young, and Wente

Aging: 14 months in French oak (67% new barrels)

Barrel Coopers: Damy, François Frères, and Louis Latour

Alcohol: 13.9% by vol.

Titrateable Acidity: 5.8 g/L

pH: 3.34

Bottling Date: December 2024

Production: 356 Cases

Site

Appellation: Mt. Veeder, Napa Valley

Acreage: 15 acres at the southern end of Mt. Veeder

Elevation: 650–960 ft.

Soil composition: Weathered sandstone, fractured shale, and clay loam

Varietals: Cabernet Sauvignon (75%) and Chardonnay (25%)

Planted: 2015

