

VINTAGE 2020



PULIDO-WALKER

Chardonnay

MT. VEEDER ESTATE VINEYARD

Coming on the heels of a vintage that saw plenty of rain return to the Napa Valley, the 2020 growing season was significantly drier. A warm winter with little precipitation gave way to limited late-spring showers and cooler temperatures—a combination that was bound to result in a small fruit set. Late summer heat spikes likely had even more of an impact valley-wide in 2020 than the lack of rain, but the Chardonnay blocks in the Mt. Veeder Estate Vineyard are early ripeners; so while other vines struggled in the Labor Day heat, all three Pulido-Walker clones had already been harvested.

And the good news kept coming. Because the warm, small crop ripened even earlier than usual, the natural acidity of the vintage was extremely well preserved. The sparser yield produced wines that were nicely concentrated at lower brix. And although the LNU Complex fire began on August 17, before the fruit was picked, the 2020 Pulido-Walker Estate Chardonnay seems not to have been impacted in any way. It has proven incredibly clean through countless tasting passes.

Winemaking & Tasting Notes

This wine has a very similar flavor profile to the 2019 Estate Chardonnay, more citrus than tropical, with pleasing white flower notes. For the first time we're getting bits of saline and oyster shell present in the vintage as the wine shows us more of itself, including its orientation to the Bay. Bigger bodied than a Chablis that might exhibit similar characteristics, the 2020 Mt. Veeder Estate Chardonnay continues to occupy a category of its own.

A broad-shouldered, muscular wine, there is a density to the Estate Chardonnay that is clearly Napa Valley influenced. We suspect there is much more dry extract in this wine than is typical for Chardonnay, which accounts for that density in the glass and on the palate. The juice from each of the clones—Wente, Montrachet, and Robert Young—is not only big enough to stand up to new oak, but also lends itself extremely well to the higher proportion of new Louis Latour barrels we've begun using to age the individual wine lots.

The 2020 Mt. Veeder Estate Chardonnay is without question a wine for devotees of Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon: a little denser, richer, more packed, with more in the glass. It's an all-around bigger experience, which might soothe some of the sting of waiting for the 2021 Pulido-Walker Cabernet Sauvignons. It's very drinkable on release, so you may not find yourself cellaring much of the 2020 Pulido-Walker Chardonnay, although it will certainly age well.

THOMAS RIVERS BROWN
Winemaker

Data

Estate Grown

Varietal: 100% Chardonnay

Clones: Montrachet, Robert Young, and Wente

Aging: 14 months in French oak (50% new barrels)

Barrel Coopers: Louis Latour and François Frères

Alcohol: 14.2% by vol.

Titrateable Acidity: 6.5 g/L

pH: 3.58

Bottling Date: December 8, 2021

Production: 158 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 soils

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

Chardonnay Clones: Montrachet, Robert Young, and Wente

Planted: 2015

