

## 2013 Lower Slope Chardonnay

As we taste each individual lot of wine from the myriad of distinct blocks on our Bell Mountain Estate ranch, we discover that certain parts of the vineyard are best as components for small production blends. These micro blocks are identified and, over time and experimentation, they become part of our *Small Lot Collection*. These wines are 100% estate-grown from our organic vineyards and limited in their release.

On the lower slope of Bell Mountain Estate, on the Russian River side of our property, there lies one small block of Chardonnay. It is on a rolling benchland that benefits from cooler nighttime temperatures and lingering morning fog. We harvested our Chardonnay in four different lots, each ripening at different times with varying levels of maturity and often earlier than most vintners in our region. This gives us fruit that is both crisp and ripe as well as unique flavors in the Chardonnay "spice rack." Our two favorite lots became the foundation of this Chardonnay – a perfect example of California Chardonnay with Old World wine values of crisp acidity and minerality.

Half of the fruit was fermented in stainless steel, kept on the lees, and stirred weekly to improve the body, mouthfeel, and bread-y-yeasty flavors. The remaining half enjoyed time in French oak barrels before the two were meticulously blended. The result is a Chardonnay with amazingly creamy texture, great acidity, and well-balanced crisp minerality. A cornucopia of flavors that include delicate floral notes, pineapple guava, candied lemon or lemon meringue, Thai basil, light mango, green apple, and apricot. The finish on the wine has a pleasant component of herb with sweet tones, an elegant touch of oak, and lingers.

### Vintage

2013 was another banner growing season in Sonoma County and our vineyards here on Bell Mountain were no exception. The growing season started with a dry spring and provided consistent, moderate temperatures that allowed our grapes to slowly progress to optimal ripeness. Fruit quality and abundance were exceptional in 2013, and we began making wine with the very best building blocks: grapes that were evenly ripe and expressed true varietal character with balanced acidity. Although the season started slowly, it ended with a bang. Warm temperatures in August and September accelerated ripening and the last vineyard block was harvested on October 16th, about 3 weeks earlier than usual.

### Profile

Appellation	Russian River Valley
Harvest	September 9-16, 2013
Cooperage	11 months, 50% steel fermented and aged; 50% barrel fermented in French oak (23% new)
Blend	100% Chardonnay, See's Clone
Alcohol	13.9%
Brix   pH   TA	22.4°   3.45   6.0 g/L
Bottling	August 24, 2014
Production	286 Cases