

2002 Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay

Family of Santa Cruz Mountains Wines

CINNABAR

VINEYARDS & WINERY

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Vintage

The winter of 2001-02 was characterized by above average rainfall and low temperatures that maintained a cold, wet grip through spring. Consequently, budbreak was delayed until March 30 (7–10 days late) while bloom was pushed back to May 25. Berry set was quite successful, but the coolness carried through July and August, delaying veraison one week until late July. Green clusters were thinned at 95% of veraison and leaves were removed periodically. The cool weather persisted through September, postponing harvest for nearly a week. The pristine crop bore excellent aromas, concentrated flavors and sound structure.

The Vineyards

Overlooking Silicon Valley from the eastern rim of the Santa Cruz Mountains, Cinnabar's "island vineyards" were the principal fruit source for this vintage. The maritime effects of the nearby San Francisco Bay and Pacific Ocean create a temperate climate that is ideal for grape growing. Cool breezes roll off the bay each afternoon and further modify conditions. The routine pattern of warm, sunny days and cool nights slowly ripens fruit and enhances its structure.

Chardonnay is planted just above the fog line at 1,400 feet of elevation where hilltop and eastern exposures provide regular sunlight. Vines welcome the influence of recurrent morning fog as the air is refrigerated in and around it.

The weathered mountain soils are mostly red clay-loam with layers of shale evident at greater depths. Relatively lean, their excellent water holding capacity minimizes the need for irrigation.

Planted in 1984, the eight acres of chardonnay vines yield small berries with high skin-to-juice ratios that translate to intensely flavored wines.

Vines are cane pruned on Scott Henry trellising with half the shoots trained upward and the other half downward.

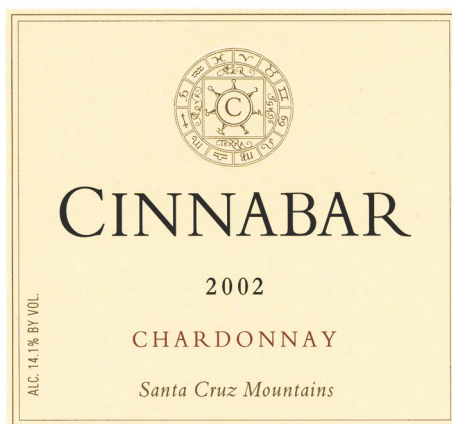
A variation of the vertical shoot position (VSP), this approach has a higher potential for photosynthesis and limits leaf overlap. One to four canes are lowered in March depending on vine vigor and the previous year's growth.

Low-till farming feeds the naturally existing ecosystem and helps maintain a balanced nutritional life cycle. Cover crops preserve good soil structure, promote water infiltration, prevent erosion, and provide a haven for beneficial insects and organisms.

Tasting Notes

Fragrances of citrus, pineapple, butter cream and smoke resonate above flavors of tropical fruit and concentrated apple with hints of mineral and sweet oak. All are enhanced by balanced acidity, full mouth-coating sensations, and a lengthy finish of fruit and toast. Serve with oven-baked Cornish hens, puréed squash soup or shellfish with cream sauce.

— Winemaker George Troquato



APPELLATION:

Santa Cruz Mountains

VARIETAL CONTENT:

100% chardonnay

HARVEST DATES:

September 15 – October 3, 2002

YIELD:

3.5 tons per acre

FERMENTATION:

100% in barrels (whole-cluster pressed at min. pressure — .25 atm)

AGING:

11 mos. in French oak barrels (30% new, Allier Forest, Remond cooper)

FINISHED ALCOHOL:

14.1%

TOTAL ACID:

0.65 per 100ml

pH:

3.45

TOTAL PRODUCTION:

696 cases