

2003 Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay

Family of Santa Cruz Mountains Wines

CINNABAR

VINEYARDS & WINERY

23000 Congress Springs Road • P.O. Box 245, Saratoga, CA 95071 • 408.741.5858 ph • 408.741.5860 fx • www.cinnabarwine.com

Vintage

The winter preceding vintage 2003 was average in temperature and precipitation. A mild spring resulted in the normal timetable for budbreak and bloom (March 20 and May 20 respectively). Berry set was a bit light, however, as a result of warm-to-cool temperature swings. Clusters were thinned near the end of a veraison (July 28) that was a few days behind what is typical. The summer was generally cool while September was extremely mild. With temperatures reaching the 90s, October proved to be the miracle month as late-ripening varieties fully matured. Yields were light, but the fruit was clean and the quality outstanding.

The Vineyards

Overlooking Silicon Valley from the eastern rim of the Santa Cruz Mountains, Cinnabar's "island vineyards" were the principal fruit source. (On cool, foggy mornings, these ridge top plantings protrude through a sea of low-lying clouds to create the illusion of an island setting.) 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.

Established in 1984 with cuttings made at Corton-Charlemagne over a century ago, this vineyard was assessed in the 1990s, then replanted with certified rootstock and clones that maximize the influence of scant mountain soils and a cool bayside climate.

Vines were planted on six-by-eight foot spacing and later trained in the vertical shoot position using bilateral cordons. This

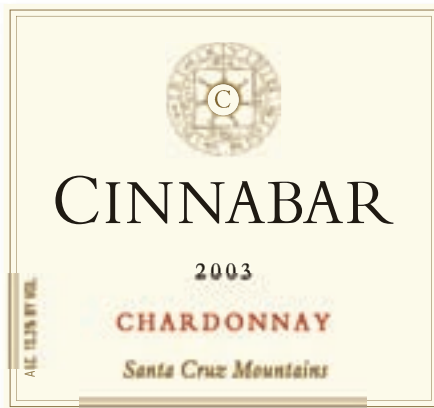
approach fully harnesses the abundant sunlight, promotes vine balance, and produces small intensely flavored grapes.

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

Tasting Notes

An nose of stone fruit, vanilla and sweet oak softly engages a mouth of ripe green apples, citrus, and wet stones. The acidity is bright while the solid structure lends itself to nearly five years of aging. A long finish pairs nicely with rustic pollenta and mushroom cream sauce, rotisserie chicken stuffed with fresh rosemary and lemon wedges, or lobster bisque.

—Winemaker George Troquato



Technical Data

APPELLATION:

Santa Cruz Mountains

VARIETAL CONTENT:

100% chardonnay

HARVEST DATES:

September 8 – 22, 2003

YIELD:

2 tons per acre

FERMENTATION:

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

AGING:

1 yr. in Fr. oak BBLs (30% new, Allier & Vosges Forests, Remond cooper)

FINISHED ALCOHOL:

15.3%

TOTAL ACID:

0.65mg per 100ml

pH:

3.45

TOTAL PRODUCTION:

500 six-bottle cases