



B. Kasuge Wines

2016 Sonoma Coast Chardonnay

In 2016 my Sonoma Coast Chardonnay is back to being a single vineyard wine from the La Cruz vineyard in the Petaluma Gap. Fruit from two different blocks went into this wine, one of them planted to the Wente selection of Chardonnay and the other to what us old timers refer to as clone 4, a high acid selection that in the '70s dominated Californian plantings. While clone 4 has large clusters and if not farmed properly can over crop, in the right place its high acid and slower ripening can yield wines of great energy and bright acidity, and so it is with the clone 4 at La Cruz. The Wente selection of Chardonnay is considered by many winemakers to be the best of the many Chardonnay selections available—small clustered, low yielding, concentrated flavors. The two selections go together well in this wine.

The Chardonnay at La Cruz sits on a hillside that overlooks the Petaluma River, a few miles southeast of the town of Petaluma. It's a late ripening site and the vines are small. Soils in this area are not very fertile--in fact, the vineyard has been converted to organic farming in an effort to boost soil health. The harvest comes late here, around the end of September/beginning of October most years. Once in the cellar, as I have done for several years now, the wine is fermented and aged in a combination of concrete eggs and neutral oak barrels. No added yeast or bacteria.

2016 was a very different growing season than 2015. There was more winter rainfall and the vines grew much more happily than the previous several seasons. And the fruit was of exceptional quality—brightly flavored, concentrated, ripe without losing freshness. One of my favorite years ever.

Almost across the board the 2016 wines I made—both red and white—have an energy to them that is really compelling. When they were young, they were almost edgy. With aging this turned into a wonderful tension between generosity and freshness. This wine has all the hallmarks of Sonoma Coast Chardonnay—bright fruit, a touch of honeycomb or beeswax, firm backbone.

\$35/bottle