



Sleeping Giant

2013 Chardonnay "Buena Tierra Vineyard" Russian River

Harvest Date: September 28th, 2013
Brix at Harvest: 25.1
pH at Harvest: 3.49
TA at Harvest: 0.60 g/100 ml
Vineyard Location: Buena Tierra Vineyard, Russian River, Sonoma Valley
Production: 197 cases of 750 ml
Vineyard Manager: John Rauck

History: The "Sleeping Giant" is the section of mountain range of the Mayacamas that runs from the Northern edge of Mount Veeder in Napa almost up to the Yountville Veterans Home. It becomes the focal point of conversation as the sun sets on the Western hills. Chris Dearden has lived and produced fine wines in Napa Valley since 1986. A trained enologist from UC Davis, with an MBA from the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley, Dearden has pursued single vineyard wines for Shibumi Knoll, and V Madrone St. Helena and Chanticleer in Yountville. His Cabernets, Chardonnays and Italian varietals have garnered both critical and consumer acclaim since 1995.

Harvest notes: 2013 provided an ample canvas for producing the Buena Tierra Chardonnay from Sleeping Giant. The weather changed from previous vintages to a warmer and drier climate. A later budbreak was followed by a temperate spring and summer with few heat spikes, but generally warmer weather. The fruit on these old vines, which were planted upwards of 45 years ago, struggle to mature, but when they do, they yield excellent flavors and aromas. We harvested a total of 3.05 tons, yielding a mere 2.57 tons per acre.

Winemaking: The ripe fruit is whole cluster pressed and the introduction of "native yeasts" is the key element to winemaking for this Chardonnay. Weekly battonage post-primary fermentation during aging provides the clean, yeasty notes evident in the wine. Fermentation is long and deliberate with malo-lactic fermentation sometimes completing six months after harvest. Patience is virtuous as good things do not happen overnight for this wine from these old, nutrient deficient vines. The wine barrel aged for 17 months sur lie in 50% new French oak, with bottling on March 10th, 2015. This is the second release from Sleeping Giant of the Buena Tierra Chardonnay although I have been making wine from this vineyard since 2003 for clients. The grapes produce golden, delicious fruit redolent of honey, Fuji apple and apricots. It possesses aromas of sweet apple and pear, allspice, nutmeg and clove, tangerine zest, lemon curd and vanilla bean. It has a toasty oak nose and the character blends in with the fruit on the palate. This wine will pair well with Dungeness Crab Louie Salad, Dayboat Scallops, Chicken Marsala, Sashimi and Butterscotch Pot de Crème. While delicious now, this Chardonnay will improve with 2-3 years of age. It will mature gracefully through 2020. Enjoy this wine with friends and family and all occasions both grand and humble.

Review & Tasting Notes from Master Sommelier Catherine Fallis: 92 Points

Daybright. Rich yellow to yellow gold...Very viscous. On the nose, the wine is expressive and inviting with notes of mandarin orange, yellow apple, apple tart, caramel apple, banana bread, rising sourdough, graham cracker, cigar tobacco, lees, nilla wafer, Madeline cookie, grilled corn on the cob and corn custard. On the palate it is rich and creamy, opulent, and juicy, with oak spice highlighting the fruit. It is very well balanced and has a pleasant tartness on the long finish. Rich and creamy with notes of grilled corn, Madeline cookie, banana bread and caramel apple.

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