

BALVERNE

CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE, RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY AND CHALK HILL

2012

Chalk Hill

Estate Red

WINEMAKER

Margaret Davenport

APPELLATION

Chalk Hill

VARIETAL

76% Cabernet Sauvignon
19% Merlot
5% Malbec

BLOCK

34 & 35

ALCOHOL

14.4%

TITRATABLE ACIDITY

6.00 g/L

pH

3.70

BARREL AGING

2 years 50% new French Oak

CASES PRODUCED

533

VINEYARD

Sonoma County growers and winemakers were cautiously optimistic about the 2012 growing season, following on the heels of three previous, problematic harvests: 2009 October rains; 2010 September withering heat wave; and 2011 disastrous September rains. 2012 brought a normal mid-March bud break and moderate summer temperatures that gave way to a cool Fall with rainfall that, by and large, held off until all but the latest grapes were safely picked. Vineyards located in Chalk Hill are emblematic of this appellation: hillside plantings on well-drained, rocky, volcanic soils, and moderate afternoon temperatures due to cooling Pacific breezes from the Russian River Valley.

WINEMAKING

The most extraordinary tool a winemaker possesses is the magic of blending, because blending can yield a wine that has much more aromatic and flavor intensity than the sum of its individual parts. The same holds true when blending the same wine that has been aged in barrels from different coopers, because each cooperage produces a unique barrel style. When tasting and comparing the components of a Bordeaux-style or “Claret” blend, all these factors come into play. Our blend is anchored around the classic varietals, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Four coopers supply new oak (50%) for this blend: Bossuet, Demptos, Fouquet, and Gillet. Chalk Hill mountain reds are big wines and require at least two years of barrel aging prior to bottling.

WINE

Cabernet predominates in this particular Claret, but the Merlot is the silent partner that accentuates the cassis and currant fruit of the Cab and combines with its bigger tannins to silken the mouth feel. A small amount of Malbec adds soft black fruit like blueberry and plum. Both Merlot and Malbec bring mid-palate richness and, with carefully chosen French oak, promote a long and complex finish.

