

T O R

TOR Chardonnay **Durrell Vineyard Wenté Clone, 2007**

Vintage

The “buzz” about this vintage came before it was over. One vintner friend, Lee Hudson, predicted it might be a “vintage of the century”. Up through September 15, when we picked Durrell, all conditions were ideal. Early, benign late March bud break, moderate crop, easy spring weather conditions, moderate temperatures, one heat blast in late August. For Chardonnay, the fruit was close to perfect: fully mature, great numbers, and concentration when we picked harvest morning.

Vineyard

For several decades Durrell Vineyard has been well known as one of California's premier Chardonnay vineyards. I have followed the Kistler bottlings for over a decade and marveled at the richness and minerality of each wine. They scream of Durrell's terroir. The Wenté clone for California winemakers is synonymous with small crops and small berries. This translates to a high skin-to-flesh ratio, which translates to a high concentration of varietal flavor. We farm "by-acre" with Durrell for the sole purpose of finding a balance of crop to vintage. Most years it is around 2 tons per acre, many years less. The soil in our Durrell block is goulding sandy clay loam. This soil is rich with diatomaceous earth and millions of years ago was probably a sand bar in the middle of a large prehistoric lake. These soils, combined with vineyard manager Steve Hill's two-plus decades of brilliant management and the vineyard's cool climate are what make this one of California's great Chardonnay vineyards.



Winemaking

Little has changed for us. Cold grapes to morning press, direct to barrel for fermentation, unfiltered, unfined. We do closely monitor fermentation temperatures, and focus on the integration of oak to wine. Battonage depends on solids, and taste. In the end we seek a wine that maintains minerality, a certain essence of terroir, handmade in every way, in very small amounts.

The Wine

The nose on the 2007 Durrell Chardonnay is more forward and a bit more intense than in past vintages. It shows off honeysuckle, lemon zest and interestingly even a touch of white chocolate. On the palate it is very clean, crisp acidity that helps to balance out the richness from the new oak and lees contact. Full back to front and side to side richness along with a 40+ second finish and pronounced minerality. Perhaps the most extroverted Durrell so far, it is probably more approachable in its youth than past vintages but very capable of ageing and improving for 5+ years.

Please note: This wine is unfiltered and unfined - and because of this we have a very slight natural sediment. Our advice is to set the bottle up for a day or two before serving.