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N A P A V A L L E Y

CUVÉE SUSAN
HYDE VINEYARD
CHARDONNAY
2023

WINEMAKER JEFF AMES' NOTEBOOK:

VINEYARD This vineyard is an extension of the man, Larry Hyde. For three decades he has had an intimate relationship with each vine in his vineyard, and in the process has built an international reputation as one of the best growers in the world. His research papers on plants (clonal material) are reference points for our industry. He is a humble man, very dry of wit, has a good appetite for excellent food and wine, and likes the company of sincere winemakers and growers.

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WINEMAKING The 2023 Hyde Vineyard Chardonnay comes from the old-vine Wente and Calera vines in Carneros. As we normally do, this is whole-cluster pressed with both clones, with no juice settling, so we go to tank and then barrel with heavy lees. The wild yeast kicks in about 7-10 days later and takes around 2 weeks to go dry. At the end of fermentation, the wild malolactic (ML) fermentation starts and will take another several months to complete. Once we're about a month away from bottling, the wine is racked to tank at 50 degrees to settle out, allowing the lees and solids to settle naturally so we can go to bottle unfiltered and unfiltered.

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WINEMAKER'S TASTING NOTES The 2023 Hyde Vineyard Chardonnay shows a bit more lanolin and richness than in previous years. It's a little thicker and denser on the palate. This wine displays magnolia blossoms, daffodils, Asian pear, and just a touch of honeydew melon, along with the slightest hint of ginger. To me, this is a wine that pairs perfectly with something like lobster or perhaps fatty Ahi.

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VINTAGE The 2023 vintage was similar to the 2018 vintage in terms of how cool it was, how long the growing season lasted, and how late it started. Over the years, I've become a bigger fan of these late and cool vintages because of the complexity they seem to build into the wines. The key to 2023 was not "panic picking" just because the season was so much later than normal, but rather waiting it out until the fruit reached the ripeness and sugar levels it needed to harvest. A great Napa Valley vintage.

