

T O R

TOR Cuvée Torchiana 2008

Blend: 100% Chardonnay
Production: 200 cases
Release Date: November 2009

Vintage

I've been through 33 vintages and can't remember one like 2008. All the rain came in what seemed a few days early in the year. By late March we were at 60% normal, and never moved beyond, marking two years of drought conditions. Spring was wild, more frost days than I can remember. The frosty bud break, then a wet off and on bloom and set gave us a very small crop to work with the rest of the year. Because of the uneven set we had to go into the vineyard several times to work on cluster uniformity.

At the end, thanks to a glorious Indian summer I brought in what I considered the some of the most concentrated, flavorful grapes yet for our wines. When the last grape came in we were 44% off normal crop size – but the quality factor is extremely high.

Vineyard

In 2008, we considered two new Chardonnay vineyard sources. One was high on Atlas Peak in Napa Valley, the other near the Hyde Vineyard in Napa, Carneros. Larry Hyde, one of the most respected Chardonnay growers in California introduced us to a very close friend of his and grower, Steve Beresini. 25 years ago Steve used selections of cuttings from Larry's vineyard to plant his own site across the street from the Hyde vineyard. We are thrilled to have this Went-Clone Hyde selection old vine Chardonnay as part of our program.

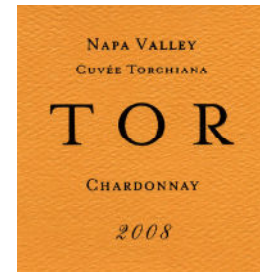
Winemaking

We pick all our vineyard sites at first light so the fruit reaches the winery already cool. The Chardonnay grapes are hand sorted to remove any un-ripe berries then transferred whole cluster to a gentle bladder press. Finally, the still cool juice is transferred to small French oak barrels for fermentation. It is important to keep the juice cool on its journey to barrel to prevent oxidation as well as preserve varietal and vineyard character.

Curiously, like our first Torchiana, this wine decided to ferment very slowly, and did not finish primary or secondary (malolactic) well into the summer of 09. While these protracted fermentations would be unnerving for a larger producer, our very limited production (6 barrels) made for a very interesting and somewhat exciting voyage. Unfiltered, unfinned, like all our Chardonnays.

Winemaker's tasting Notes

At first sight this wine shows a brilliant green/gold color. On the nose there is hazelnut, cream, sweet spices and Meyer lemon. On the palate you find extreme richness and complete front to back/side to side palate coating richness. Honeysuckle, nectarines and an almost crystallized focus from the acidity. Extremely long and lingering on the finish, this wine promises to not only age well but get better for at least another 3-5 years.



"...Big orange marmalade, pineapple, and honeyed lemon-like aromas jump from the glass of this full-bodied, in-your-face, exuberant Chardonnay. Good acidity, terrific concentration, and a beautiful long finish suggest this excellent Chardonnay should drink well for 3-5 years."

Rated (95) by
Robert Parker, Jr.
"The Wine Advocate"