

ANTHILL FARMS

2016 Peugh Chardonnay

Santa Rosa, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County

2016 Vintage: 2016 was a transition year for the North Coast of California; drought conditions eased up somewhat, but the accompanying warm winter led to an early budbreak, with many vines emerging from dormancy in February. The growing season itself was a welcome return to normal: moderate temperatures prevailed throughout the spring and summer, with few of the punishing heat waves that we saw in 2014 and 2015. Despite the evenness of the weather, the early budbreak led to an equally early and incredibly rushed harvest. The wines are dark in color, very detailed, and refreshing, though with a decidedly mellow, welcoming streak.

Vineyard: This head-trained vineyard sits smack dab in the middle of the Russian River Valley, spread out on the plains that make up the northwestern outskirts of Santa Rosa. The faded brown soils, known as Huichica loam, offer an excellent mix of low fertility and rapid drainage. Most notable about the site, however, is the age of the vines: we don't know it exactly, but the best indication is that they were planted in the early 1940s, making it some of the oldest producing Chardonnay in the state.

Winery: Our Chardonnay process is as simple as we can make it -- we pick based on a healthy amount of acid and as low as potential alcohol as possible. We press using a gentle, long Champagne-style program to retain the breadth of flavor without excessive extraction. We then put the juice immediately into neutral oak barrels and stand back, merely keeping the barrels cool to keep the spontaneous fermentation from moving too quickly. At the conclusion of primary, we allow the wine to go through an uninoculated secondary fermentation, often lasting until mid-spring. The Chardonnay is typically bottled after 14-15 months in barrel.

Tasting: The 2016 is a bit broader than vintages past, but with similar aromatics of iris, caraway and lanolin, that reveal themselves over brief aeration. The palate opens to reveal waves of spiced white pepper, pink jasmine, and balancing, refreshing minerality.

Drink now through 2024. Alcohol 14.1%.

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