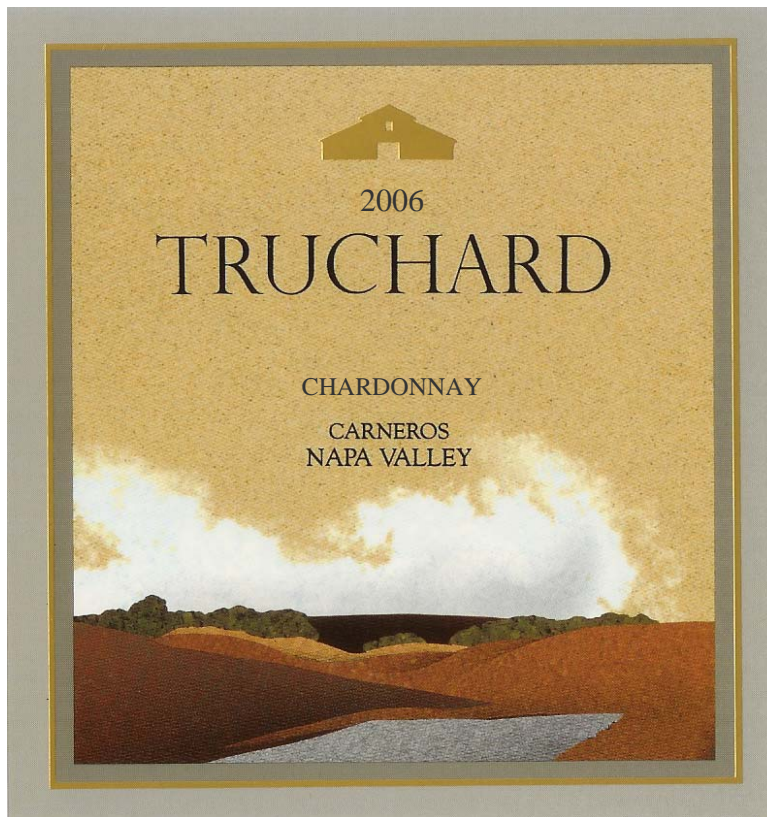


KOEPEL ON WINE



Truchard Vineyards

Chardonnay Napa Valley Carneros 2006

EXCELLENT – Here’s exactly what devotees of California chardonnay desire most — *should* desire most — a chardonnay of poise and balance, of tremendous body and presence permeated by subtleties of crystalline purity. Lovely tone here, a nuanced layering of peach and pear, roasted lemon and lemon curd imbued with smoke and spice and, yes, a rich, slightly honeyed aspect leavened by chiming acid and a limestone element that burgeons in the glass. Oak is there but almost tissue-like in delicacy, a silk scarf thrown around a bare shoulder warmed by the sun. I love it, but a gentleman who tasted this wine at the same time I did complained, “There’s nothing to it. If I’m gonna drink California chardonnay I wanna feel that oak and butter!” I turned away, a silent prayer for mercy on my lips.