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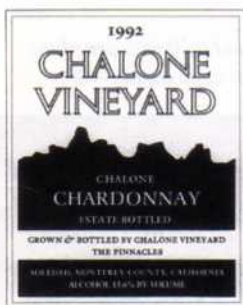
10 AMERICAN

97

CHALONE VINEYARD

1992 Chalone Estate

Here's a wine to sit back and think about, to bring up in taste memory together with the finest chardonnays



you've ever had, from whichever side of the ocean. Burgundy is surely the direction here, and specifically the Pulignys of Leflaive. There is a simultaneous attack of the purest chardonnay fruit and an undertone of oak just so perfectly managed.

The wine, from Chalone's estate vineyard in Monterey County, comes from vines planted in the early 1970's. It was aged in oak for nine months, and then three months in bottle before release. There were 10,691 cases produced. \$26

96

STONESTREET

1991 Sonoma County

There are green-appley chardonnays and extremely oaky, concentrated ones. It's not difficult to find either, the real challenge



being to locate examples which bring fruit and oak into balance. Here's a true gem, with rich, buttery aromas from barrel fermentation and aging, together with clearly defined chardonnay fruit and just the right note of acidity to unite all elements of the package.

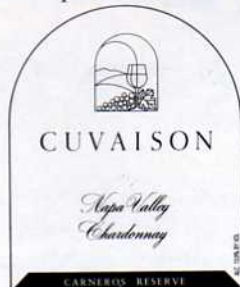
Stonestreet used to be the Stephen Zellerbach Vyd., until purchased in '89 by Jess Jackson of Kendall-Jackson (winemaking at K-J and Stonestreet are entirely separate). In '92, the majority of the grapes came from Sonoma's Sangiacomo and Durell vineyards; 7,600 cases were produced. \$20

95

CUVAISON

1992 Napa Valley Carneros Reserve

Here is just what the cooler part of the Napa Valley delivers at its best—a Puligny-like wine with nuances of lemon and just the appropriate edging of oak. Winemaker John Thacher has been refining this style for several years, and this current example is one of his



very finest. From the evident quality of the fruit through barrel selection to the development already of some bottle bouquet, this wine is a paradigm of California chardonnay.

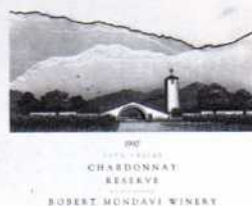
The Reserve is made from a selection of lots from Cuvaison's Carneros vineyard, which produced 42,000 cases of chardonnay in 1992, and 1,250 cases of the Reserve. \$25

95

ROBERT MONDAVI

1992 Napa Valley Unfiltered Reserve

Sometimes expensive chardonnays are actually worth the money, which is certainly the case in this example. The buttery impression of wines like this one works only when there is fruit to match, which here is amply rich and



purely chardonnay. You'd want to think of this investment as you might something in the Montrachet range. In that context, it sounds like a value.

The majority (about 80%) of the grapes for the '92 came from Carneros. The wine was fermented in French oak, underwent malolactic fermentation, and aged for fourteen months in barrel. There were 7,000 cases produced. \$28

95

TRUCHARD

1992 Carneros/Napa Valley

This is just simply an extraordinary wine, with chardonnay fruit brought to the point of tropical ripeness, but



without the least hint of clumsiness. There's a restrained scream for grilled swordfish, but you could look at a glass, look at it again and say, "Aren't I lucky." And you are, because there were only 682 cases of this wine produced, (and it was released last April, so by now it may be rare indeed).

Anthony Truchard became a grower in Carneros in '73. Since then, he has built his Carneros vineyards to 170 acres. He began making wine in '89, and this one clearly reflects the privileged siting of his vines. \$16