

### ZD Wines Chardonnay, California

ZD Chardonnay is set apart from most Chardonnay in the marketplace because of its distinctive style, the quality of its production, and the consistency with which it is produced. Its style is based on four elements, and each element makes an important contribution to the overall production of the final wine.

First, ZD's style is to blend Chardonnay grapes that are specially selected from California's cool, coastal growing regions. This blending process builds complexity in the wine and maintains consistency with every vintage. Secondly, ZD barrel ferments and ages its Chardonnay in American oak barrels. American oak offers subtle nuances that make ZD wines distinguishable and flavorful.

ZD Chardonnay also undergoes cool fermentation. This slow process of fermentation extends yeast contact, which contributes to the creamy texture similar to wines aged sur lees. Finally, there is no malo-lactic fermentation in ZD Chardonnay. This is purposely controlled to preserve the varietal character and natural acidity of the wine. As a result, ZD Chardonnay ages more gracefully and is a great compliment to food.

### The Production of ZD Traditional Chardonnay

Beginning in September and lasting throughout most of October, ZD's grapes are hand harvested and brought quickly to the winery, where they are crushed and pressed in separate vineyard lots. The juice is then cooled and put into 50-gallon oak barrels. Each vineyard lot is maintained separately and is 100% barrel fermented. Due to the cool temperature in ZD's cellars, barrel fermentation lasts about 6-8 weeks. Most barrel fermentations last about 3-6 days. This very slow, cool, fermentation is extremely important to the quality of ZD Chardonnay. It maintains the fruit and gives the wine a creamy, toasty character that is brought about from extended contact with the yeast as it is suspended in the fermenting wine. This cool temperature also inhibits a secondary (malo-lactic) fermentation, allowing ZD Chardonnay to maintain its natural acidity. Once the barrel fermentation is complete, the clear wine is racked (taken off the lees) and put back into 50-gallon oak barrels for aging.

Tasting of the individual vineyard lots begins in late January, as Winemaker Chris Pisani begins his analysis for final blending. The separate wines are tasted regularly until April or May. Then, the individual vineyard lots are tasted in different blend combinations to determine which produces the finest final wine. Blending wine from the different vineyards and regions is probably the single most important element in creating ZD Chardonnay. Throughout the year, Chris looks to produce a consistent style of wine from all of the individual vineyards, but each invariably shows subtle differences. These subtle differences complement one another as they are blended, adding layers of complexity to the final wine.

After blending is complete, the final wine is put back into the barrels where the individual aromatics and flavors are allowed to marry. Bottling begins in July and is completed in August prior to the arrival of grapes for the next vintage. ZD Chardonnays are consistently rich wines that are well balanced and demonstrate the full spectrum of varietal character.