



2005 *Conner Lee Vineyard Chardonnay*
COLUMBIA VALLEY

Located on Radar Hill south of Othello, Washington, Conner Lee Vineyard is a cool site in a warm sunny region. Like a desert, the spring and fall nights can be 50 degrees cooler than the day temperatures. The hot summer ripens the fruit, while the fall temperatures keep the acids balanced and the pH low. Like almost all of Washington State's vines, the Conner Lee Vineyard was planted with ungrafted vinifera. Our 1989 block is planted in sandy-silt soils, which provide excellent drainage.

Bud break was in early April in 2005, flowering in early June, veraison in mid-August and harvest the week of September 25th. We cane prune these vines annually. We shoot thin in mid-spring, cluster thin at veraison, and do not leafstrip. These steps promote excellent canopy and develop concentrated fruit early in the season. The spring and summer is in fact when we develop fruit expression and minimize herbaceous flavors. The fall weather ensures its ripeness and fulfills the fruit concentration efforts of the summer.

Our chardonnay was harvested by hand the week of September 25th, physiologically mature at 23.5°brix hydrometer, 8.6g/L acid, and 3.25 pH. This developed an alcohol of 14.0%. We grew eight pounds of fruit per plant. Whole cluster pressed, the raw juice fermented entirely in one, two, three, and four year mature Burgundy barrels. We chose to use only one new barrel out of 21 total. This wine's balance is naturally developed in the vineyard. We do not add acids or water to our juices. Instead, we grow our fruit to balance the natural juice acids so that our wine needs no additions. After malolactic fermentation starts, we taste for the vintage's balance and preserve the original malic acid in the wine with partial fermentation for stylistic crispness. This wine was milk-fined to improve its long finish. The chardonnay was lees stirred until bottling on August 12th, 2006. Buty white wines are naturally heat and cold stable between 45°F to 90°F. Sediments may develop if stored cooler or hotter. We believe this wine is ideally served at 50°F to 55°F, where after it can warm up at the table.

The nose is attractive and ripe, echoed by clean flavors of stone fruits and vibrant citrus notes. The silky texture and the long, crisp, fruit-filled finish complete our wine, unobscured by oak. Powerful like the 2002 vintage Buty wines, it is young and wound up at release and will open and taste best over the next three years.

Four hundred ninety cases were produced. Released September 1, 2006.