



2017 *Conner Lee Vineyard*

CHARDONNAY

COLUMBIA VALLEY

Vineyard: We have made a Conner Lee Vineyard Chardonnay since our debut 2000 vintage. Originally planted in the early 1980s, this acclaimed vineyard is located at approximately 1,100 feet on the plateau of Radar Hill south of Othello, Washington. It is a cool site in a warm, sunny region. In our Eastern Washington desert environment, the spring and fall nights can be 50 degrees cooler than the daytime temperatures. The hot summer months of July and August ripen the fruit, while cooler fall temperatures keep the acids high and the pH low. We work with Conner Lee's prized 1989 block and its 2005 'clone #95' block. Both are planted with ungrafted vines in well-drained sandy-silt soils. To achieve a pure, complex style, we prune for optimum fruit positions in February, shoot thin in May and cluster thin at veraison—all to promote concentration early in the year.

Vintage & Harvest: Following several early harvests, 2017 offered a return to a more classic Columbia Valley growing season—and an ideal vintage for white wine grapes. After a nice wet spring that made for healthy and happy vines, we enjoyed relatively temperate mid-season weather (by Eastern Washington standards) that slowed down ripening. This allowed the grapes to develop beautifully articulated flavors at lower sugars with high natural acidity—all of which we love! Mild weather during harvest allowed us to pick at our leisure, resulting in pristine clusters. We picked our clone #95 grapes on September 15th at 21.9° and 3.49 pH, and our 1989 block chardonnay on September 22nd and Sept 26th at 22.8° Brix/3.25 pH, and 23.5° Brix/3.37 pH respectively.

Winemaking: To preserve the Chardonnay's more delicate fruit characteristics, this wine was 100% whole-cluster pressed. 68% was fermented in predominantly mature Marcel Cadet Burgundy barrels, with a modest 11% new French oak. To enhance texture and richness, we fermented the other 32% in a concrete tank. Adding to the wine's bright, fresh character, only 40% went through malolactic fermentation. In keeping with our gentle winemaking approach, and a belief in preserving complexity, this wine was not cold stabilized. As a result, if stored exceedingly cold, it may shed natural tartaric crystals.

Tasting Notes: This dazzling chardonnay offers lovely richness, intense aromatics and beautiful fruit, all at a relatively modest 13.7% alcohol. Inviting aromas of white flowers, Honeycrisp apples and tropical lime blossom rise from the glass hinting at the wine's layered complexity. On the lush palate, flavors of tangerine, apple and wet-stone minerality mingle with notes of brioche and cinnamon, with cool-climate acidity keeping everything bright and energetic.

Seventy cases were produced. Released September 1, 2018.