



2018 *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 1991 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: The 2018 vintage began with a warm spring that spurred an early start to budbreak and the growing season. This was followed by a lovely temperate summer that allowed the grapes to slowly ripen, developing vibrant flavors, while retaining excellent natural acidity. The grapes enjoyed abundant hangtime, and we were able to harvest each vineyard and block exactly when we wished. In short, 2018 was perfect for our style of wine. We picked our clone #95 grapes on September 8th at 22.3° Brix and 3.56 pH, and our 1991 block chardonnay on September 7th at 23.6° Brix and 3.28 pH.

Winemaking: To preserve its more delicate fruit characteristics, this wine was 100% whole-cluster pressed. All of the fruit was fermented in predominantly mature Marcel Cadet Burgundy barrels, with a modest 8% new French oak overall. Adding to the wine's bright, fresh character, only 35% 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. Intricate and enticing aromas of white flowers, golden apple, Asian pear, black tea and wild honey rise from the glass. The palate strikes a seamless balance between opulence and vibrant acidity, adding length and nuance to the lush orchard fruit flavors, with hints of marzipan, cinnamon and brioche emerging on the long, satisfying finish. Alcohol 14.1%.

Two hundred and seventy cases were produced. Released September 1, 2019.