



# FOUNDERS RESERVE CHARDONNAY

VINTAGE 2018 • SONOMA COAST • ESTATE BOTTLED

## OBSERVATIONS ON A NEW VINTAGE

One of the best things about growing grapes and making wine is that no single year is like any prior year and each brings unique challenges. Overall, 2018 saw a return to below average rainfall. Late spring rains kicked the growing season off to a great start although they arrived a couple of weeks late. A very warm summer brought our fruit progression in line with normal development timelines. August and early September saw another wild swing in temperatures with cool and foggy conditions. Our very first fruit was harvested from the Les Pierres vineyard about two weeks behind average, but after the painfully slow start, our pace picked up in October. A beautiful fall with cool, foggy mornings and sunny, warm afternoons yielded fruit from this vintage with elegant flavors and bright, natural acidity.

## ON THE VINEYARD

Founders Reserve is always the most intriguing wine of the vintage and normally crafted from select fruit of single vineyard blocks. Fruit for this vintage was provided from our Les Pierres vineyard with blocks D and I contributing 94% of the grapes.

Our southernmost estate vineyard, Les Pierres sits atop the gravelly clay loam of an ancient riverbed, thick with cobbled stones that infuse the grapes - and the wine - with a varied mineral essence. The rocks absorb sunlight and slowly release heat to the vines. When combined with the cool fog that tempers the warm Sonoma Valley temperature, the result is a long growing season that allows the fruit to ripen and reach full maturation.

## ON THE WINE

Grapes were hand-harvested starting in the early mornings and then cooled down to preserve the fruit's fresh flavors and natural acidity. After hand-sorting, the grapes were gently whole-cluster pressed to avoid bitter tannins from the skins and grape seeds. The cool, golden-green, free-run juice was then settled naturally in tanks for a few days before heading to French oak barrels for fermentation. The wine was fermented sur-lies in one-year old barrels for sixteen months with no fining or filtration applied.

The beautiful aromas of this wine are classic Les Pierres - deep and complex. Known for its earthy flavor profile, this vintage does not disappoint with mineral and wet stone aromas mingling with lemon-lime, hazelnut, rose petal, white peach and sweet oak. Loads of lime and mineral flavors with mouthwatering acidity that finishes with a hint of toasted oak spice. You will find the wine beautifully focused and streamlined on the palate and finely balanced with a long, lingering finish. While this vintage is ready to drink now, the best is yet to come and we recommend cellaring for one to two years.



Alcohol: 14.3% • TA: 6.07 gms/L  
pH: 3.3 • RS: 0.45 gms/L (very dry)  
100% Chardonnay • 100% Malolactic  
Vineyard Designation: 100% Les Pierres  
(52% Block D, 42% Block I, 6% Other Blocks)  
Fermentation: 100% Oak  
Oak Aged: 16 months - 100% 1-year old

Please enjoy our wines responsibly.

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