

BROWN

NAPA VALLEY

BROWN ESTATE 2011 NAPA VALLEY CHARDONNAY

Composition	100% Estate Grown Chardonnay
Vineyard Source	Far West Vineyard, Brown Estate
Appellation	Chiles Valley District, Napa Valley
Fermentation	Barrel fermented 30% new French Oak
Alcohol	13.5% by vol.
Production	300 cases in 12 x 750ml format

Vineyard Source

Our chardonnay vineyard is a bona fide outlier, residing at the far northwest corner of our estate property. The soil in this truly wild west vineyard is a dense gray clay, thick enough to pull your shoe off your foot should you venture out when it's damp. At four acres it typically yields a mere two tons maximum per acre. The fruit extracts from the clay soil a terrifically complex minerality that sets the resulting wine apart from typical Napa Valley chardonnay offerings.

Growing Season

The 2011 growing season was plagued by an unusually long stretch of spring rains, resulting in more shatter than normal which in turn required extended time and care – literally known as triage – at the sorting table during crush, to remove the “shot” berries. But even as we bemoaned 2011's diminished yield, it was precisely that extra shatter brought on by the heavy spring rains that saved us during the unrelenting rains that hit at harvest. Periodic breaks in the fall rainy season allowed the loose clusters to dry out and continue ripening. It was a rollercoaster ride – as growing zinfandel tends to be – watching the fruit and hoping the brix would get to the right levels. Knowing just when to bring the fruit in was a guessing game because even with the best technology on hand we can only predict the weather to a limited degree. We usually take 30 days to harvest all of our fruit, but in 2011 we were done in less than two weeks. The history of this wild growing season is now bottled in our 2011 wines, and it is truly a thriller. Like a sailor who's been out at sea battling stormy weather to make it home, the 2011 vintage has a spectacular story to tell.

Tasting Notes

Gemstone-clear as a canary yellow diamond, our 2011 Chardonnay sparkles in the glass and dazzles the eye. Even more stunning is the nose, a departure from previous vintages in that the usual tropical fruit notes are underpinned by dreamy notes of buttercream and nut, with subtle spice and brine reminiscent of a luscious double scoop of pralines and cream in a waffle cone. These characteristics impart an old world quality to a lingering overtone of vanilla cream, followed through with hints of tropical pineapple, guava, and lemon meringue that give way to vibrant lemongrass and bergamot tinged with menthol and misty yarrow. Decadent mouthfeel is round, full, and plush with a lively reverberation that only hints at the latent potential of a sublime palate that is only enhanced by time in the glass. Drink now through 2025.