

Ceritas

2023

Old-school cool.

2023 began in perfect contrast to 2022 - wet and cold. Groundwater began replenishing for the first time in several years, laying the foundation for a cool, classic vintage.

As we entered April, nature's attempt to shake off the dreary and gray conditions of Winter seemed delayed. What followed was some of the latest budbreak dates we had ever seen - our cooler sites pushing to the end of April.

A mild, gentle Spring followed. Temperatures hovered between 70F - 80F for most of May and June - picture-perfect flowering and fruit set conditions allowed for a strong, healthy crop of nascent berries. Shatter was nearly non-existent.

Our dry-farmed vines, accustomed to a severe lack of water for three years, shot up vigorous canopies in response to the moist soils the weather had provided. At this point, everything was proceeding at a normal pace.

The heatwaves that have become so common seemed to miss Northern California in 2023. A relative lack of warmth and sunlight slowed down the growth cycles of our vines, delaying veraison to an extreme degree.

Berries at most of our vineyards began to show some color around the middle of August, and we closed the month with no fruit in tank - something that has not happened since 2006.

This delay in the harvest allowed us to perfectly prepare the facility and equipment for what was looking to be a bumper crop.

Harvest commenced in the early morning hours of September 13th at a new vineyard for us, Belle-Summe. The remainder of September called for sporadic picks across the Sonoma Coast, with nothing from Santa Cruz until October 3rd at Peter Martin Ray.

Harvest always has a peak, and ours came during the first two weeks of October with more than half of our fruit arriving in that span. The season ended at Trout Gulch, just a day before Halloween.

As fermentations reliably proceeded, there was a palpable excitement in the winery. The fruit was pristine and turgor pressures were high. The aromatics were exploding from the tanks and the chemistries were perfect.

In many ways, 2023 felt like something we had never seen before. *The weather never became hot* - the hangtime we saw without accumulation of sugar was unprecedented. Flavors became massively intense at minuscule sugars and electric acidities.

Much has been said about 2023. At the risk of hyperbole, this is the kind of vintage that we dream about. The wines are monumental, benefitting from climatic conditions that supported our style. They will be long-lived, fresh, structured, and saturated with flavor. Don't miss these.

Harvest Dates:

Belle - Summe	September 13th
Cuvée Chloe	September 19th
Carex	September 20th
Elliott	September 23rd
TBH	September 23rd
Peter Martin Ray	October 3rd
Cuvée Annabelle	October 5th
Mt. Pajaro	October 6th
Hellenthal	October 7th
Mariana's	October 9th
Charles Heintz	October 10th
Paratus	October 12th
Zephyr	October 12th
Mindogo Ridge	October 13th
Trout Gulch	October 30th

2023 TROUT GULCH CHARDONNAY / SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS

Ride the lightning.

Trout Gulch crackles with energy every year, having become almost synonymous with verve and freshness. Uplifted marine soils and an outrageously cold climate produce Chardonnay that reminds us of great Chablis. Carefully restricted yields allow us to maintain density and flavor in the palate. This is such a joy to drink, young and old.

2023 Tasting Note:

Certainly lives up to its reputation, especially in such a cold season. Lime pith, pomelo, and sea salt combine in the intoxicating nose. With massive tension on the palate, this is in no hurry. While clearly young, the wine is deeply refreshing with a persistent acidity and lemon-lime flavor. The intense phenolic character here is mouthwatering. Electric. (2027 - 2045)

2023 TBH CHARDONNAY / SONOMA COAST

TBH, OMG.

We jumped at the opportunity to source a few rows of Chardonnay from Paul and Kathryn Sloan's densely planted home estate. Occupying a chilly portion of the Green Valley, TBH stands out amongst many well-regarded neighbors. Rigorous farming and thin, meager soils allow the tiny Wente Clone Chardonnay clusters to retain fabulous intensity at shockingly low pHs.

2023 Tasting Note:

Rapidly becoming one of the more exotic wines in our portfolio. On the nose, ocean-spray is felt immediately, with a distinct influence of dried lavender and spearmint. The complex palate reminds us of a barely-ripe Santa Rosa plum - bursting with flavor despite colossal acidity. A touch of spicy vanilla at the end completes the experience. Magical. (Now - 2039)

2023 CUVÉE ANNABELLE PINOT NOIR / WEST SONOMA COAST

A site for sore eyes.

Cuvée Annabelle comes from a small section of revered Calera Clone Pinot Noir at the Red Car Estate in the Fort Ross - Seaview AVA. Greg Adams planted the site in 2001 using budwood from what later became our Occidental Vineyard and has been farming it ever since. The resulting wine is a joy to drink, bursting with a pure, concentrated fruit profile.

2023 Tasting Note:

Perhaps the best vintage of Annabelle so far. There is a wild character here that we have not seen previously - the aromatics add something ferric, meaty, and savory to a core of rich, dark fruit. The palate seems at odds with the nose, offering crystalline freshness and shockingly gentle, but present, tannin. The cold vintage clearly agreed with this remote, high-altitude vineyard. (Now - 2040)

2023 ELLIOTT PINOT NOIR / WEST SONOMA COAST

Old dog. New tricks.

Merely a stone's throw from the Old Shop Block, Elliott is a stark example of the incredible diversity of soil found on the West Sonoma Coast. Significantly thinner, rockier soils impart a great deal of natural stress on these old vines, providing a scant crop of massively flavored grapes. Elliott is built for the long haul with pronounced tannin and a strong spine of acidity.

2023 Tasting Note:

Pours a delicately pale garnet in the glass. A more ethereal aromatic vintage for Elliott, with an herbal punch to the red-fruited perfume on the nose. Everything becomes darker and more intense on the palate, with a firm tannin structure and flavors of ripe strawberry, maraschino cherry, and purple flowers. Like many of the 2023 Pinot Noirs, the tingling acidity is mouthwatering. (2026 - 2045)

2023 MT. PAJARO PINOT NOIR / SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS

Full circle. Full throttle.

Mt. Pajaro has captivated us for many reasons. Beyond the beautiful view, Mt. Pajaro enjoys a startling diversity of soils, stemming from an unusual splinter in the San Andreas Fault Line. The site is farmed to exacting precision by the Rhys crew, all of whom live and work on the ranch. The early Ceritas vintages here are chiseled and bright, with an unbelievable depth of flavor.

2023 Tasting Note:

Textbook Santa Cruz. The nose is immediately enticing, offering plum, licorice, and a distinct savory component. Mt. Pajaro tends to deliver one of the more firm tannin structures in our portfolio, and this is no exception. The palate is clearly a little wound up, but the potential is clear. Bright, vivid blood orange and oolong tea are most apparent. (2028 - 2047)