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*History & Commitment**The Oldest Continuously Operating Winery in the Napa Valley***► A Winemaking Legacy**

Jacob Beringer left his home in Mainz, Germany, in 1868 to start a new life in the United States. His brother, Frederick, had preceded him by five years and wrote home constantly of the grand opportunities to be found in the vast new world. Frederick had settled in New York, but that life did not appeal to Jacob. Unlike his brother, Jacob Beringer enjoyed toiling in the cellars in his youth in Germany. He had heard that the warm, sunny climate of California was ideal for growing wine grapes, so in 1870 he

traveled by train, first to San Francisco and then on to Napa Valley. To his delight, he discovered rocky, well-drained soils similar to those in his native Rhine Valley.

The volcanic soil was ideal for growing the varietal grapes of Europe's winemaking regions, and, best of all, the hills could be dug out to provide storage and aging tunnels that would maintain the constant temperature needed to produce fine wines. Jacob bought land with Frederick in 1875 and settled into producing wines comparable to the premium wines he had developed in Europe. In 1876, they founded Beringer Winery.

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The tedious task of hand-chiseling the rock tunnels was completed by Chinese workers returning to the San Francisco area following completion of the Trans-Continental Railroad. The tunnels took several years to complete but rewarded the brothers with an extremely effective storing and aging facility that maintains a mean temperature of 58°F. Today, Beringer Vineyards continues to age fine wines, including its Knights Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, in the tunnels they built.



While the winery was being built, Jacob took up residence in a farmhouse on the property built in 1848, now referred to as the "Hudson House." Meticulously restored and expanded, the Hudson House serves today as Beringer Vineyards' Culinary Arts Center.

In 1883, Frederick began construction of the 17-room mansion which was to be his home-a re-creation of the family home located on the Rhine River in Germany. Frederick's "Rhine House," now on the National Register of Historic Places, serves as Beringer's hospitality center.



Beringer Vineyards, the oldest continuously operating winery in the Napa Valley, celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2001. Jacob Beringer's foresight in recognizing the quality and potential of grape growing in the Napa Valley is part of the living heritage of Beringer Vineyards. With the present use of state-of-the-art technology applied to age-old traditions, Beringer Vineyards' wines continue to reflect a single-minded dedication to the making

of memorable wines from great Napa Valley vineyards.

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Knights Valley Vineyard
...uniquely KV Cabernet Sauvignon
and Sauvignon Blanc...



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Arranged by Taste

We have arranged our wines in the list below to help you discover which Beringer wines you may enjoy most based on taste. They are ordered from more mild, light and fruity blush and white wines to stronger, full-bodied, tannic red wines.

White Wines

SAUVIGNON BLANC

More delicate [Beringer Founders' Estate Sauvignon Blanc](#)

*Medium-bodied,
Lightly oaky* [Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc](#)

LIGHT, FRUITY BLUSH & WHITE WINES

Very fruity [California White Zinfandel](#)

[California White Merlot](#)

[Beringer Johannisberg Riesling](#)

[Beringer Chenin Blanc](#)

[Beringer Gewürztraminer](#)

Just off-dry [California LVS White Zinfandel](#)

ALTERNATIVE DRY WINES

Mild, fruitier [Napa Valley Viognier](#)

*Moderately rich,
More oaky* [Knights Valley Alluvium Blanc](#)

CHARDONNAY

*Medium-bodied,
Moderately oaky* [Beringer Founders' Estate Chardonnay](#)

[Napa Valley Chardonnay](#)

[Sbragia-Limited Release Chardonnay](#)

*Full-bodied,
Rich and oaky* [Private Reserve Napa Valley Chardonnay](#)

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Describing Wines

Have you ever listened to a wine connoisseur describe wines, "blackberry, cherry, toast..." and wondered where those adjectives come from? **Jane Robichaud**, Beringer's sensory director, unveils the mystery behind the naturally occurring aromas and flavors in wine.

"There is a scientific basis for the descriptors we use to describe wines. I'm often asked how a wine can smell like pineapple or taste like berries," comments Robichaud. "The fact is that wine grapes often share many of the aromatic essences --- groups of naturally occurring compounds like terpenes and esters, for example --- that are also found in fruits, flowers and herbs all over our natural world. Other aromas and flavors, such as butter or vanilla, are the result of techniques used by the winemaker."

Here are several examples. Click on a listed aroma or flavor below to learn more about it and why you might smell or taste it in wines.



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Describing Wines

Floral



WHITE WINES

The honeysuckle and jasmine aromas commonly found in Muscat, Gewürztraminer and Riesling come from a group of compounds called **terpenes**, which are also found in honeysuckle and jasmine flowers.

RED WINES

The aroma of violets can occur in Cabernet Franc and other red varieties; the aroma of roses can occur in Beaujolais and comes from the compound **phenylethanol**, which is also found in roses.



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Describing Wines

Fruity

**WHITE WINES**

The grape varieties used in white wines, such as Chardonnay and some Sauvignon Blancs, typically share compounds with and have the aromas of fruits like pineapple, pear, peach and apricot. Gewürztraminer typically shares the aroma of lychee fruit. **Esters** produced by the yeasts used in fermentation also have fruity aromas. White wines are generally fermented at cool temperatures to maintain these characteristic aromas and are best served cool for the same reason.

RED WINES

The grape varieties used in red wines typically share compounds with and have the aromas of red fruits like cherries and berries. Aromas of jam (or even prunes and raisins) can occur in wines made from very ripe grapes. Fresh, young Nouveau wines may have a characteristic aroma of fruit candy.



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Describing Wines

Herbaceous



WHITE WINES

Sauvignon Blanc typically has some herbaceous aromas, especially those of bell pepper and cut green grass or dried herbs. The bell pepper aroma derives from a compound called **3-methyl pyrizine**, which is especially pronounced in Sauvignon Blanc grapes grown in cooler areas of California. Beringer Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc, made from grapes grown in areas further north in Napa Valley, tend to have less of this herbaceous aroma and more of a floral or fruity aroma.

RED WINES

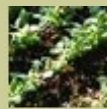
Aromas such as mint, eucalyptus and other herbs and vegetables commonly occur in Cabernet Sauvignon. For example, a bell pepper aroma derived from a compound called **3-methyl pyrizine** is especially pronounced in grapes grown in California's cooler grapegrowing regions. Earthy aromas are a varietal characteristic of Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir and may become more pronounced with age.



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Describing Wines

Spiced



WHITE WINES

Gewürztraminer (German for spicy wine made from Traminer grapes) has a spicy aroma reminiscent of cloves or nutmeg. Spicy aromas are also found in white wines that are aged in oak, including some Chardonnays. The characteristic aroma of cloves comes from **eugenol**, which is also found in oak barrels. Oak from different sources has different levels of spiciness, and the winemaker makes a deliberate choice to include or exclude this quality when choosing barrels.

RED WINES

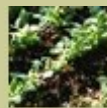
Black pepper aroma is a common varietal characteristic of Zinfandel and Syrah grapes. The aroma comes from a compound called **piperidene**, which also gives black pepper its characteristic smell. The characteristic aroma of cloves comes from **eugenol**, which is also found in oak barrels.



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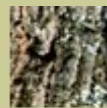
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Describing Wines

Oaky

**WHITE WINES**

Woody, vanilla and smoky aromas come from fermenting and aging the wines in oak. The compounds responsible for some of these aromas are common to both the wood and the wine --- **vanillin**, for example. A smoky aroma in wine comes from heavily toasting the barrel over fire while it is being coopered.

RED WINES

Woody, vanilla and smoky aromas come from fermenting and aging wines in oak. The compounds responsible for some of these aromas are common to both the wood and the wine --- **vanillin**, for example. A smoky aroma in wine comes from heavily toasting the barrel over fire while it is being coopered.



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Describing Wines

Caramelized

**WHITE WINES**

Nutty aromas derive from aging in oak and can be enhanced if the spent yeast, known as lees, is left in the barrel and stirred into the wine as it ages. Honey aromas come from the oak used for fermentation and aging. The aroma of butter occurs when the wine undergoes a secondary fermentation process that converts malic acid to lactic acid, also softening the wine and rounding its mouthfeel. The aroma comes from **diacetyl**, which also gives butter its characteristic aroma.

RED WINES

A caramelized aroma like cedar derives from fermenting and aging wines in oak. Pinot Noir can develop aromas such as molasses and soy when its fruit aromas diminish during aging; Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot can take on the aroma of chocolate as they age. The aroma of butter occurs when wine undergoes a secondary fermentation process that converts malic acid to lactic acid, also softening the wine and rounding its mouthfeel. The aroma comes from **diacetyl**, one of the by-products of this secondary fermentation, which also gives butter its characteristic aroma.



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Beringer Founders' Estate

California Wines

CHENIN BLANC



2002 Beringer Chenin Blanc

The long, warm days and cool nights of California's vineyards provide the ideal growing temperatures for Beringer's Chenin Blanc. Daytime sun encourages the fruit to ripen, developing soft peach and ginger-honey flavors, while the fog-shrouded evenings bring forward crisp citrus and mineral notes.

Winemaking

Gentle handling and careful attention was given to the Chenin Blanc grapes from the vine to the glass. To retain the delicate varietal flavors of crisp melon, citrus and pear, Beringer's winemakers chilled the juices immediately following crush and continued to closely monitor the temperature throughout fermentation. Just before dryness, they cooled the juices even further to halt fermentation and retain a smooth, lush mouthfeel and lingering finish.



2001 Beringer Chenin Blanc

At it's best, Chenin Blanc is characterized by flavors and aromas of ripe stone fruit and melon balanced with lighter, crisp notes of citrus and mineral. To achieve this balance of sweet and austere, Beringer winemakers selected grapes from two California costal growing regions. For flavors of sweet peaches and honeydew melon, winemakers sourced grapes from North Coast Vineyards, where cool, foggy mornings warm up into long, sunny afternoons creating full, ripe fruit flavors. For the orange, lemon and steely mineral notes, winemakers looked to the Central Coast, where the cooler, maritime influenced growing regions produced wines that are crisp, with good acid structure.

Reviews: Read [reviews](#) about this wine.

Winemaking

Winemaking To retain the Chenin Blanc's natural finesse and delicate

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Beringer Founders' Estate

Appellation Collection NAPA VALLEY SAUVIGNON BLANC



2000 Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc
Most of Beringer's Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc vineyards are located in the warmer regions north of Oakville. At some distance from the cooling influence of San Pablo Bay, these areas enjoy what vineyard manager Bob Steinhauer considers the soils and microclimates best suited to this varietal. Bob and his team diligently manage the Sauvignon Blanc's innate vigor through proper trellising (Geneva Double Curtain) and other viticultural practices to increase sunlight exposure and air circulation to the clusters

so the vines will produce grapes with balanced citrus, lush stone fruit and melon flavors backed with a subtle herbal character.

Reviews: Read [reviews](#) about this wine.

Winemaking

When winemakers Ed Sbragia and Laurie Hook create Beringer's Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc, their goal is always to produce a balanced wine with layers of flavors and nuance. To achieve this in 2000, they chose to ferment individual vineyard lots separately using different techniques. About 80 percent of the juice was barrel fermented, mostly in small French Nevers oak barrels, and the wine went through a secondary, malolactic fermentation to convert the tart malic acid to the softer, creamier lactic acid. This portion of the wine was then barrel aged for six months. In a separate process, Ed and Laurie cold-fermented the balance of the juice to highlight the Sauvignon Blanc's citrus and herbal notes and retain a bright crispness in the wine. Finally, they blended in some Sémillon for the viscous lushness it brought to the palate and to add aroma and flavor characteristics of ripe melon, dried apricots and honeyed figs.

Winemaster Comments

"In 2000, our Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc fruit came into the winery with juicy, delicious flavors and a really nice balancing acidity. By reigning in Sauvignon Blanc penchant for vigor through our viticultural

SEARCH

BERINGER 1999 Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc

Desert Magazine

Best Buy (Norman Mark) September 2002

Food & Beverage International

The pleasant herbal note that characterizes Sauvignon Blanc is still there, but it is balanced by ripe fruit flavors that have no green edge at all. I also find a nice note of grapefruit and some spicy fig in the wine in this vintage. May 30, 2002

Wine Investor/Buyer's Guide

A less grassy wine with herbal and citrus notes. Juicy grapefruit and wild flowers are evident in the nose and on the palate. ... Nice mouth feel and finish. March 2002

Press Democrat

Soft with sweet fruit flavors. ...Notes of orange marmalade, peaches and buttered baguette. January 9, 2002

Richmond Times-Dispatch

Bold and fruity from the first sip. (Layne Witherell) December 5, 2001

Star-Telegram

Wines of the Week Lush and round, blended and balanced with toasty oak and spice. October 3, 2001

Tasters Guild

Honeyed tropical fruit, grapefruit zest, fresh cut grass, spices and vanillin oak. The aromas flow into the flavors of melon, peaches, apricots, spices and citrus tinged vanillin oak. Lovely mouthfeel that adds to the lengthy crisp finish. August 2001

Martha Stewart Living (Television)

Rated - Very good ...as a part of a blind tasting conducted by Dorothy Gaiter and John Brecher (Wall Street Journal) on Martha Stewart Living, Beringer Vineyards 1999 Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc came in second place! June 15, 2001

The Insiders' Wine Line

...has a bouquet of melon, honeysuckle, apple, citrus, peach and grassy notes. The flavors of melon, citrus, herb and vanilla are fresh and flavorful followed by a fruity, spicy finish. June 2001

Sante

Beautiful citrus and honeydew aromas. Light in body, but filled with fresh lemon and lime flavors; finishes with zippy acidity and fresh melon flavors. June - July 2001

Wine Spectator

Rated 85 Soft, with melted butter, vanilla and yellow apple notes framed by subtle citrus flavors. June 15, 2001

The Capital

...a good value, this sauvignon blanc has a healthy, 15 percent semillon in the blend. With that marriage you get richness, subdued grassiness and layered fruit of ripe limes, melons and hints of spice and apricots. May 23, 2001

The Times

... this is delicious, with the tangy, ripe fruit filled out with butter and oak. May 6, 2001 (London)

California Grapevine

Rated 88 Highly Recommended ...floral, toasty, tropical fruit aroma with the notes of vanilla and hazelnut; medium-full body; forward, rich, fleshy, toasty, herbal flavors with a rounded

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component begins or ends because it has such good balance. Bright and lively, apple, pear, pineapple and citrus aromas are surrounded by sweet vanilla and nutty aromas. These characteristics lead into a full mouth of caramel-apple and tropical fruit flavors with a cohesive body that carries everything into a long, luscious finish. A quintessential Napa Valley Chardonnay."

Laurie Hook, Winemaker



2000 Napa Valley Chardonnay

The 2000 Napa Valley Chardonnay is a blend of fruit from a handful of estate vineyards that are located in the heart of the Napa Valley. Scattered from Yountville south into the cooler Los Carneros AVA (American Viticultural Area), each vineyard produces fruit with individual and unique aroma, flavor and structural attributes that reflect their varying soils and microclimates.

Winemakers Ed Sbragia and Laurie Hook chose to use 42 percent Yountville Vineyard grapes because it typically has a bigger personality, providing fruit that is rich and opulent with a honeyed butter/citrus quality. Stanly Ranch in Carneros provided 23 percent of the blend because Ed and Laurie wanted to add its balancing acidity, apple and lemon-lime flavors. Gamble Ranch in Yountville and Hudson Ranch closer to Napa provide additional complexity to the blend.

Winemaking

Ed and Laurie kept all of the individual vineyard lots of wine separate through fermentation and aging so their unique aroma and flavor characteristics would be retained. All of the lots were fermented in French oak barrels (30 percent new) and the winemakers chose to stir the lees monthly, as the wines aged for nine months, to encourage a toasty, nutty quality that is balanced by crisp acidity. One hundred percent malolactic fermentation was completed which brought a rich creaminess and roundness to the mouth. Six more months of bottle aging allowed the crisp apple, citrus, and tropical fruit aromas and flavors to come together with nutty, toasty, sweet vanilla notes.

Winemaster Comments

"The Chardonnay grapes from our Napa Valley vineyards in 2000 had great, uniform maturities. As the individual lots were coming into the winery, Ed and I were thrilled with the wonderful flavors we tasted. Even at that early stage, we were thinking about how well the various lots would come together to create a delicious, complex layered wine. The 2000 Napa Valley Chardonnay combines the best characteristics of our Napa Valley vineyards into a classic, rich Chardonnay with a lovely mid-palate reminiscent of crème brûlée and lemon curd. Mouth-filling citrus, apple and pineapple flavors support and balance the toasted creaminess."

-Laurie Hook, Winemaker



1999 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Butterscotch, honey, nutmeg, citrus and toasted coconut aromas highlight mouth-coating tropical fruit, creamy vanilla and balancing citrus flavors.

Vintage Release: March 2001

Reviews: Read [reviews](#) about this wine.

Winemaking

The fruit for the 1999 Napa Valley Chardonnay came from Beringer's vineyards in the southern part of Napa Valley, from Yountville south into Los Carneros. The cool climate of this broad region allows the fruit to develop layers of aromas and flavors while retaining a balancing acidity. Our vineyards closer to Yountville consistently produce fruit with bigger personality, with flavors that are rich and opulent with a honeyed butter/citrus quality. Fruit from the vineyards further south have a more subtle, leaner character with tropical fruit and apple/pear aromas and

BERINGER 1999 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Food & Drink Magazine

Masses of attractive buttery vanilla oak... Opulent, intense, tangy, it's a wine that makes you say "Wow!" Summer 2002

Wine & Spirits 13th Annual Restaurant Poll

12 Most Popular Chardonnay April 2002

Richmond Times Dispatch

Both subtle and complex, the result is of very high-quality vineyards. (Layne Witherell) December 5, 2001

Denver Post

Creamy, buttery; exactly what you want but often must pay so much more for. (Bill St. John) Jul 4, 2001

Tasters Guild

Rich, juicy fruit, creamy aromas bordered by a scent of spices and vanillin oak. A medley of honeyed apples, spices, peaches, mandarin orange zest and creamy vanillin oak in the zippy flavors. Long, long on the tasty finish. July 2001

Wine Spectator

Smart Buys Rated 88 Ripe and rich, with fig, peach pit, butter and caramel notes, finishing with toasty oak flavors. July 31, 2001

Wine Investor/Buyer's Guide

World Class (3 Stars) Very Burgundian in style with toasted oak, vanilla and a baked fruit quality. Well extracted with a leesy intensity and solid mid-palate. June 2001

The Insiders' Wine Line

...has aromas of ripe apple, tropical fruits, honeysuckle, citrus, brown spices and butterscotch. The flavors of tropical fruits, apple, vanilla and citrus are balanced with good depth followed by a fruity, nutty, creamy finish. June 2001

International Wine Cellar

Rated 87 Expressive aromas of apricot, roasted pear, clove, honey, smoke and earth. At once juicy and thick, nicely framed by lemony acidity. May - June 2001

Arkansas Democrat - Gazette

...one of the most beautifully crafted white wines in its price range. It offers generous, perfectly balanced citrus, tropical fruit, apple and pear flavors that are complicated by engaging nuances of vanilla and brown spice with hints of butterscotch lingering in the background. The texture of the wine is creamy and notes of toast, nut and honey accent its persistent finish. (Robert Neralich) May 2, 2001

Entree

...complex, intensely flavored wine from premier grapes handcrafted traditionally as only Beringer can do. May 2001

Wine & Spirits

Rated 88 Ripe... starts with a mineral-tinged scent and flows into a clean, luscious texture... Flavors of hazelnuts and white chocolate. April 2001

Beverage Industry News

91 Points Unusually persistent, the 1999 Beringer may be a harbinger of things to come from the outstanding California 1999 vintage. Beginning with an attractive apple aroma, this smooth-palated Napa Valley Chardonnay exhibits lots of delicious fruit and superb dryness

- [Beringer Founders' Estate Shiraz](#)
- [Beringer Founders' Estate Chardonnay](#)
- [Beringer Founders' Estate Sauvignon Blanc](#)
- [Beringer Founders' Estate Merlot](#)
- [Beringer Founders' Estate Cabernet Sauvignon](#)
- [Beringer Founders' Estate Pinot Noir](#)
- [Beringer Founders' Estate Zinfandel](#)

California Wines

- [California White Zinfandel](#)
- [California White Merlot](#)
- [Beringer Johannisberg Riesling](#)
- [California LVS White Zinfandel](#)
- [Beringer Chenin Blanc](#)
- [Beringer Gewürztraminer](#)
- [Beringer Gamay Beaujolais](#)
- [Beringer Nouveau](#)
- [Beringer California Zinfandel](#)

Stone Cellars by Beringer

- [Stone Cellars Chardonnay](#)
- [Stone Cellars Merlot](#)
- [Stone Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon](#)
- [Stone Cellars Shiraz-Cabernet](#)
- [Stone Cellars Pinot Grigio](#)
- [Stone Cellars Sauvignon Blanc](#)

2000 Knights Valley Alluvium Blanc

Winemaster Ed Sbragia and vineyard manager Bob Steinhauer first began working together with Knights Valley fruit in the late seventies. They spent the next decade learning the vineyard's personality and understanding the varied microclimates and alluvial soil types that occur throughout the property. In the late eighties, when phylloxera became an issue and replanting was mandated, Sbragia and Steinhauer applied their knowledge to determine which varieties, rootstocks and clonal selections were ideal for the vineyard. Bob and Ed knew that vigorous varieties such as Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon would be naturally restricted by the gravelly, low-nutrition soils and with modern trellising techniques, and are able to grow vines that have optimal sun-to-cluster exposure, allowing consistent maturity in the grapes.

Reviews: Read [reviews](#) about this wine.

Winemaking

Ed Sbragia and his winemaking partner, Laurie Hook, barrel fermented the individual lots of the two varieties in 60 percent new French oak and stirred the lees twice a month during the nine months of barrel aging. This created a round, lush mouthfeel in the wine and toasty, vanilla, nutty-leesy oak aromas and flavors. The wines underwent malolactic fermentation to bring a creaminess that balances the crisp acidity in the Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Ed and Laurie chose to accentuate the Graves-style that is natural in Knights Valley whites by composing the base of the 2000 Alluvium Blanc with Sémillon (49 percent) and Sauvignon Blanc (40 percent). They also blended-in nine percent barrel-fermented Chardonnay to add lushness and a small amount of Viognier to enhance the floral, lemon-verbena aromas.

Winemaster Comments

"The 2000 Alluvium Blanc has a delightfully fruity nose that is nicely framed in soft, sweet vanilla oak notes. I smell orange blossoms, citrus, and nectarine with a wisp of smoke and crème brûlée. The mouth has similar flavors with good acidity to balance everything and a very long, rich finish. Our Winemaster, Ed Sbragia and I really like the brightness of the fruit in this wine - it makes it extremely versatile. I enjoy the 2000 Alluvium Blanc alone or with a broad range of cuisines because it is so complex and balanced."

--Laurie Hook, Beringer Vineyards Winemaker

1998 Knights Valley Alluvium Blanc

Classic white Bordeaux varieties, Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc, combined with small amounts of Chardonnay and Viognier are used to make this wine. The result of this combination is layered aromas and flavors of lemon curd, citrus peel, honeydew melon, white flowers and a light, smokey spiced-oak.

Winemaking

The 1998 growing season started late as a result of cool, wet spring weather and was prolonged when the cool weather continued into the summer. To ensure full ripening of the grapes, vineyard workers did labor-intensive shoot positioning, leaf thinning and cluster thinning to ensure that the grapes ripened evenly over the growing season. Warm, dry autumn weather beginning in September continuing through October allowing the grapes to develop to their full flavor potential.

Ed Sbragia treated the individual components for this wine very much like he treats his Private Reserve Chardonnay. The wines were all barrel fermented in small French Nevers oak barrels, about 35 percent of them new, and aged for over ten months. The wines underwent 100-percent malolactic fermentation to enhance mouthfeel and add nuances of creamy butter. After aging was completed, Ed combined classic white Bordeaux varieties Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc in equal proportions and smaller amounts of rich Chardonnay and floral Viognier.

Winemaster Comments

Alluvium is an unusual name for a wine, but it's one that we winemakers love because it ties the wine to the special soil found in this very special vineyard. I wanted this wine to truly express the Knights Valley appellation, and I'm very

BERINGER 1999 Knights Valley Alluvium Blanc

Wine Advocate

Rated 89 Reminiscent of a white Graves, with notes of passion fruit, a flinty character, spicy oak, and rich, melony, honeysuckle aromas and flavors. This fleshy, potentially outstanding white should age well for 3-4 years. (Robert M. Parker, Jr.) December 23, 2000

Wine Spectator

...lavish and rich, with well-integrated vanilla, mocha and lush fruit flavors. May 31, 2002

Wine Enthusiast

This is a very fruity wine, one dominated by apple and peach and citrus flavors. Good acids make it bright, and it's impeccably clean and focused. September 2002

Los Angeles Times

This wine blended with 12% Semillon and 10% Chardonnay and then oak-aged, is clearly a member of the richer is better camp. I like its pear and lemon blossom fruit, its sweet oakiness and its full, balanced feel on the palate. (Charles Olken) March 20, 2002

Connoisseurs' Guide

Complex, rich, fruity aromas start this effort off on the right track with glimmers of peach, pear and lemon blossom all wrapped in the sweet, toasty notes of crème brulee. Full in body and nicely balanced on the palate, the wine hits the promised mark in its deep flavors and carries through to a long finish. March 2002

Omaha World - Herald

... a virtually perfect white wine. February 27, 2002

The Wine Investor/Buyer's Guide

BEST BUY A Graves style blend of Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, 10% Chardonnay and 2% Viognier which enhances the lemon-verbena aromas. In the mouth the wine shows a creamy texture, hints of nuts, oak and citrus flavors. Very complex and striking. February 2002

Minneapolis-St. Paul Magazine

Break out of your white rut with this blend... February 1, 2002

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Filled with silken complexities; it has nicely focused fruit, toast and vanilla flavors, a lush texture and a bright, crisp finish. January 16, 2002

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Wine of the Week February 21, 2002

The Gazette

Rich, complex and nicely balanced honey, cream, fig and citrus notes. (Rich Mauro) January 9, 2002

think that I know all there is to know about it - I'm glad to say that I don't! I've certainly learned a lot since the old days experimenting with barrel fermentation and various lees-stirring regimes to figure out how we could push the flavor-intensity envelope and still have balance. A lot of the work we've done has been in the vineyards as we learned the nuances of the different sites and how the individual blocks within them could be fine-tuned to maximize flavor. We've dialed our attention-to-detail further into focus each year in the winery as well and the 1999 Private Reserve Chardonnay is a good example of this - it has rich, ripe layers of bright citrus, lemon peel, pineapple and smoky, toasty oak with sweet vanilla and butter notes. There's only one word for it: Delicious!

Ed Sbragia, Winemaster



1998 Private Reserve Napa Valley Chardonnay
The 1998 vintage of this wine has "suggestions of lightly caramelized apples and pears, bright citrus peel, cinnamon spice, sweet creamery butter and light smoke and toast" says winemaster Ed Sbragia.

Vintage Release: January 2000

Reviews: Read [reviews](#) about this wine.

Winemaking

Patience is a virtue in a vintage like this one, said vineyard manager Bob Steinhauer, "but the wait was worth it for the flavors we achieved in the fruit." The 1998 growing season began very late, with cool spring weather extending into early summer. Our vertical trellising systems, and additional painstaking steps taken by our vineyard workers--positioning shoots, thinning leaves and even dropping clusters--, helped ensure that the grapes received optimal sun and air exposure throughout the season. Warm, sunny weather in September and October gave the grapes additional time on the vines before they were picked between October 1 and 15.

Winemaster Ed Sbragia carefully selected grapes for this wine from 6 of our estate vineyards: Yountville Ranch, Hudson Ranch, Stanly Ranch, Big Ranch Road Vineyard, Gamble Ranch and State Lane Vineyard, each of which is located in the cool southern end of Napa Valley. Ed earmarks for the Private Reserve certain blocks within each of these vineyards based on their history of producing especially complex, layered Chardonnay.

Each of the wines from the individual vineyard blocks were barrel fermented and aged separately in mostly new French Nevers oak barrels to maintain their unique flavor characteristics. Following fermentation, the wines were hand-stirred weekly on their lees. Ed believes that this labor-intensive technique adds a rich, nutty dimension to the wine as it integrates with the wood. Ed also put the wines through 100-percent malolactic fermentation to encourage a buttery aroma and flavor and a dense, creamy mouthfeel. After the wines had aged in barrel for 9 months, Ed selected his final blend, layering the butter and citrus flavors of the wines from around Yountville with the apple/pear flavors of the wines from the vineyards in the Carneros region, closer to San Pablo Bay.

Winemaster Comments

When I first began making Private Reserve Chardonnay, back in 1978, we simply went out into our vineyards and selected the grapes with the most concentrated, complex flavors. We still make this selection, and we still recognize that certain vineyard blocks consistently produce richer fruit. However, in the decades since, we've learned to take early steps that help us grow more luscious fruit through the viticultural practices we have adopted. Now we are truly producing the grapes for this wine 'by the vine,' rather than by vineyard selection only. We ensure that each vine is balanced individually in terms of the amount of fruit relative to the foliage. That process starts at pruning and carries on throughout the growing season as our vineyard workers assess and adjust each vine and its crop. This approach bumps up the quality of all our Chardonnays and gives me even more choices for the special fruit I select for the Private Reserve. I believe our early and constant attention to the vine is really paying off in the concentrated aromas and flavors we are getting in the glass.

-Ed Sbragia, Winemaster

BERINGER 1998 Private Reserve Chardonnay

The Hartford Courant

Wine of the Week This wine is indeed a looker, liquid gold in the glass, but there's real taste and intelligence in the sipping. This Chardonnay is complex, mature to the point of assertiveness, with buttery oaky flavors enlivened with notes of vanilla, melon and a dash of citrus. May 16, 2002

Wine & Spirits 13th Annual Restaurant Poll
12 Most Popular Chardonnay April 2002

Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Soft flavors blended into a smooth, velvety, rich wine. The alcohol, the fruit, the acid blend together so well that nothing jumps out to take center stage. (Renie & Sterling Steves) May 9, 2001

The Cincinnati Enquirer

Always one of California's top chards, this beautiful wine exemplifies how winemakers should use oak: smoothly integrated, not overly dominant. May 6, 2001

Spotlight's Wine Country Guide

Lightly spicy, toasty & sweet vanilla...rich, nutty dimension...buttery aroma & flavor result in a dense, creamy mouthfeel. May 2001

Wine News

Most Popular Chardonnays: #26 April 2001

Wine & Spirits 12th Annual Restaurant Poll

Most Popular Chardonnays: #26 April 2001

Wine Advocate

Rated 90 ... Displays elegant attractive buttery/tropical fruit, and high quality smoky, toasty oak characteristics. Long, lusty, and rich, this Chardonnay should be drunk over the next 2-3 years. (Robert M. Parker, Jr.) 2000!

Wine News

CALIFORNIA'S BEST WINES OF THE YEAR: #2 Chardonnay Attractive, intense scents of toasty, smoky oak, tropical fruit, caramel and a shy, green olive note. Creamy and smooth with luscious, tropical citrus and apple-pear fruit flavors; full-blown, spicy and moderately buttery with excellent balance and a lingering, caramel-tinged finish. (Steve Pitcher) December/January 2000-01

Wine News

Rated 90 Pale, golden hue; notably viscous. Aromas of honey, mineral and toasted oak. A well-balanced package of ripe pineapple, toasted oak and tangy acidity. Creamy finish with a lick of butterscotch. August/September 2000

Wine Enthusiast

Rated 89 This stylish, opulent wine is marked by an array of ripe fruits, ranging from citrus through peach, apricot and mango, and is lavishly oaked, with a rich, creamy texture and lots of smoke and toast on the nose. October 2000

Wine Spectator

Rated 87 Elegant, even understated, with a pretty core of hazelnut, ripe pear and citrus notes... June 30, 2000

Connoisseurs' Guide

Two puffs Generously toasty in its oak barrel influences, this oily textured, relatively full-bodied

Chardonnay possesses more than enough deep, ripe appley fruit to keep itself comfortably in balance. Layered notes of roasted grains and sweet lemons add to the mix here and, while not hiding the wine's barrel influence, make it all the more complex... July 2000

International Wine Cellar

Rated 91 Deep, slightly floral aromas of dried fruits, melon and buttery oak. Very ripe, oaky and concentrated; a note of honey contributes to the impression of sweetness. The impressively persistent finish offers very good grip. May/June 2000

California Grapevine

Rated 90 Very Highly Recommended Attractive, stylish, forward, intense, very toasty, buttery, ripe tropical fruit aroma; medium-full body; rich, lush, toasty, lemony, ripe tropical fruit flavors with good depth; lingering aftertaste. A big, full-blown style of Chardonnay with lots of fruit and oak. August/September 2000

Epicurean

Rated 90 Intense fruit reminiscent of grilled pineapple with cinnamon, crisp acidity, yet silky smooth on the palate and an uplifting fruit finish that lingers for minutes. October/November 2000

Quarterly Review of Wines

Oak, melon, hints of smokiness and toast, along with brilliance of color commingle to make this worthy of a Private Reserve. There's a nice denseness and creaminess in the mouth and finish, with buttery tones everywhere. Hints of pear and lemon follow all the above in the finish as the layers of flavors unravel showing its complexity. Buy lots. (Richard L. Elia) Summer 2000

Wine & Spirits

...The oak rounds the aroma and tastes of butter and vanilla, pushing the apple-scented fruit into a sweet and savory blend. The luxury of the oak and fruit interaction continues in the mouth... Warmer, rounder, all curves, almost as rich as a bowl of drawn butter for your lobster... Fall 2000

Wine Investor Buyer's Guide

*** World Class Beginning with a melange of caramelized apples, pears, and lemon peel aromas; this wine is loaded with spice and complexity; the palate shows impressions of sweet butter, light smoke and spice. Long and rounded finish. Could easily be mistaken for a ler Cru Meursault. September 2000

Underground Wine Journal

A full-bore Chardonnay dripping in the most lavish oak and ample fruit with deep "appley" aromas and flavors that it keeps itself comfortably in balance. It gets complexity from layered notes of cooked grains and roasted lemons, and it has size and depth... December 2000

Vintners' Club

Best Wines in 2000 Attractive, intense scents of toasty, smoky oak, shy green olive herbaceousness, tropical fruit and caramel. Creamy and smooth with luscious tropical, citrus and apple-pear fruit flavors, this full-blown Chardonnay is spicy and moderately buttery, with excellent balance and a lingering caramel-tinged finish. (Steve Pitcher) January 16, 2001

Martha Stewart Living

Classy Chardonnay Beringer is always a reliable name... for Chardonnay that is even more special, look for Beringer's Private Reserve... November 2000

Playboy.com

Offers the perfect package of toasty oak, well-balanced fruit and an inviting viscous golden color. The tastes and flavors come at you in ever-changing layers like cashmere and silk on the mouth. The forward fruit suggests a raging sweetness but the finish with its refreshingly civil crispness keeps it in check. The thick, creamy mouthfeel together with the buttery, vanilla aroma combines with the citrus, apple and pear flavors of the well-selected grapes to produce a tastefully