Austin Hope

2025 CHARDONNAY

Austin Hope is in constant motion and a lifelong learner. He continually pushes his team to explore and experiment with new varietals, new techniques and concepts that will ultimately improve the quality of his wines for everyone to enjoy. When a particular trial or experiment exceeds expectations, Austin is able to share it with the Cellar Club. These small production wines are truly the result of his lifelong passion and

HARVEST NOTES

The 2025 growing season was mild from beginning to end. Winter rainfall reached 60% of normal, and cool spring conditions delayed budbreak by 7–14 days. Mild summer temperatures supported ideal canopy growth but slowed fruit development, with fruit set up to two weeks later than normal. We experienced our coolest summer and early fall on record, with average seasonal highs of 87.9°F compared to the normal 89.9°F. These conditions encouraged nutrient and water uptake and steady flavor development but significantly delayed sugar accumulation and berry maturity. Harvest was consequently delayed, with cool to mild weather and a series of low-pressure systems bringing multiple rainfall events uncommon for Paso Robles, further slowing ripening and harvest. Warmer weather arrived in mid-October, helping the berries mature following the rainfall. Despite the delays, harvest was a success.

We sourced majority of this Chardonnay in the Northwest area of the Monterey County AVA. Soils here are sandy in nature, with a mix of loamy, alluvial soils and crushed ancient seabed material. Chardonnay thrives in this microclimate of overcast days during later spring through early summer which helps with better growth and maturation. This vineyard sits on an east facing slope, allowing for morning and early afternoon sunshine during summer while being shaded by the Santa Lucia mountain range by mid-afternoon providing near-perfect conditions for full flavor development while maintaining acid. We also source a small amount of Chardonnay from the Paso Robles Highlands District, where warm days encourag e full fruit ripeness while cool evenings help preserve natural acidity. This fruit contributes a riper, more concentrated fruit profile and added richness to the final blend, balanced by refreshing acidity that complements the bright, mineral-driven character of the Monterey County fruit.

WINEMAKING NOTES

Following harvest, the grapes were whole cluster pressed into stainless-steel tanks for settling. The juice was then racked off its heavy lees and transferred to a combination of barrels and stainless-steel tanks for fermentation. Sixty percent of the juice was barrel fermented using a combination of 1/3 New French Oak, 1/3 1x & 2x Used French Oak, and 1/3 Neutral barrels. The remaining 40% was fermented in stainless steel. The barrel-fermented portion underwent twelve months of sur-lie aging, with weekly stirring during the first three months to enhance the wine's creamy texture. The final blend was assembled in September 2026. The wine was then gently crossflow filtered prior to bottling.

TASTING NOTES

The 2025 Cellar Select Chardonnay opens with aromas of fresh starfruit and bright citrus, layered with a clean minerality, fresh melon, and subtle hints of spice. On the palate, notes of white peach and citrus meld seamlessly with a smooth, rounded texture, creating a delicate lemon meringue effect on the palate. Balanced by a refreshing acidity and lingering finish, this Chardonnay exudes freshness and elegance.

TEHNICAL NOTES

VARIETAL(S): 100% Chardonnay
AVA: Central Coast
HARVEST DATE: 9/5/25 and 9/15/25
AGING PROGRAM: 60% Barrel (1/3 New FO, 1/3 1x and 2x Used FO, 1/3 Neutral) and 40% Stainless Steel
TIME AGED: 12 Months
ALCOHOL: 13.50%
pH: 3.42
TOTAL ACIDITY: 0.58 g tartaric/100mL
DRINKING WINDOW: 2026 - 2034

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