

Leo Steen Wines

2018 Bruzzone Vineyard, Chardonnay - Santa Cruz Mountains

Release Date: Spring 2020

Production: 300 cases

Vineyard: The grapes for this wine come from a single vineyard located in the southern hills of Scotts Valley, just four miles from the town of Santa Cruz and the Pacific Ocean. The dry-farmed Chardonnay vines on this site were planted in 1998, in sandy soils rich in marine deposits. Surrounded by forests, and featuring a north-south row orientation, these vines yield small, tiny-berried clusters. While this is a very cool vineyard that produces grapes with great acidity, the fruit also achieves lovely ripeness at low sugar levels.

Harvest: The 2018 growing season produced another exceptional vintage, a wet spring followed by a mild summer allowed the grapes to mature slowly without heat stress. Though yields were above normal, quality was very good and the healthy canopies maintained a high acidity level. Further to preserve the high natural acidity that defines this wine, we hand harvested our Bruzzone Chardonnay on September 24th at 20.5 brix.

Fermentation: We broke the berries prior to pressing and fermented the grapes in a combination of 360 gallon French oak cask and 500-liter French oak puncheons.

Cellar Notes: This wine was aged for 16 months in French oak cask, French oak barrels and 500-liter puncheons. To enhance richness and mouthfeel, it underwent 100% malolactic fermentation and the lees were occasionally stirred. This cool-climate Chardonnay was bottled in early 2020 using minimum sulphur.

Technical Notes:

Alcohol: 12.5%

pH: 3.24

Total acid: 6.8 g/l

Malolactic fermentation: 100%

Tasting Notes: This is a beautifully intricate Chardonnay, with saline minerality and enticing layers of lemon zest, orange peel, with hints of lime, and mint. On the palate, the flavors are framed by a dynamic undercurrent of cool-climate acidity. While it has both nerve and energy, there is also an inviting creaminess to this wine, that offers a lovely counterpoint, while helping to draw the flavors to lingering finish.

Vision: In the winery, I strive to be true to each variety I work with and to craft fresh, lively wine with the ability to complement an array of modern cuisines.