



FROSTWATCH *Vineyard & Winery*

## Frostwatch 2017 Bennett Valley Chardonnay

**Cases produced:** 276 cases

**Suggested retail:** \$30

**Composition:** 100% Chardonnay—60% Clone 4 and 40% Platt Wente Clone

**Harvest dates:** October 4<sup>th</sup> for the Platt Wente Clone, October 18<sup>th</sup> for the Clone 4

**Brix at Harvest:** Platt Wente Clone 24.0 brix, Clone 4 25.3 Brix

**Blend TA:** 5.0 g/l

**Blend Ph:** 3.50

**Alc:** 14.8%

**Vineyard Sources:** The grapes come from two blocks in our Frostwatch Vineyard. Our vineyard is located in Bennett Valley, a relatively new AVA in Sonoma County. A gap in the surrounding mountains permits cool coastal breezes and fog to pour into the valley on a regular basis throughout the spring and summer. As a result, the appellation is distinguished by its very long growing season, modest yields relative to other areas and full-flavored wines with good natural acidity. Frostwatch Vineyard, planted in 1997, is located on a rocky apron beneath Bennett Peak. We planted the Platt Wente Block in 2008 at double the density of our previous plantings and utilized a very low-vigor rootstock (420A). The Clone 4 block was planted when we originally developed the vineyard in 1997 on 5C, another relatively low vigor rootstock.

**Winemaking:** The grapes were picked at night and then whole cluster pressed and barrel fermented utilizing indigenous yeast. After a four-week primary fermentation was complete, malolactic fermentation utilizing indigenous malolactic bacteria proceeded and finished in late February 2018 for the Platt Wente lot and mid-March for the Clone 4 lot. During the 4 months the wine was going through primary and malolactic fermentation, the barrels were topped, stirred and topped weekly. The purpose of topping the barrel prior to stirring is to minimize oxidation. The frequent stirring heightens the sur lees character of the wine and acts to better integrate the oak notes from the barrels with the wine. The wine was fermented and aged in 41% new French Oak and 59% once used French Oak for 19 months. The wine was fined and bottled unfiltered on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**Tasting Notes:** The 2017 vintage progressed nicely, until fires (starting on October 8<sup>th</sup>) disrupted the harvest. Smoke from those fires impacted red grapes that had not yet been harvested. White grapes were not impacted by the late season smoke because they are processed in a way that minimizes skin contact with juice (gentle whole cluster pressing). As with other Frostwatch Chardonnays, this wine is a blend of two different clonal selections from our vineyard. Clone 4 contributes a full mouthfeel with loads of red apple fruit, while fruit from the Platt-Wente Block contributes vibrant citrus notes and a touch of minerality. This wine continues to improve with additional bottle aging and still has yet to reach its full potential. The wine pairs well with a variety of foods, however it is rich and complex enough to drink beautifully on its own.

**Winemaker:** Brett Raven

**Ratings:** 2017—95 pts, Gold Medal 2020 Press Democrat North Coast Wine Challenge, 90 pts, Gold Medal 2020 American Fine Wine Competition. 2016—95 points, Best of Class 2019 Press Democrat North Coast Wine Challenge, 94 pts 2019 American Fine Wine Competition, Gold Medal 2019 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, 90 Pts Wine Advocate.