

Stag's Leap Wine Cellars

Stag's Leap Karia Chardonnay is a graceful and refined Napa Valley Chardonnay, combining fresh fruit flavors with delicate acidity and a subtle oak influence.

STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS



Karia Chardonnay 2023

California, USA

Region and Vineyards

The **Karia Chardonnay** is sourced from a selection of cool-climate vineyards in southern **Napa Valley**, including **Atlas Peak (43%), Carneros (32%), Coombsville (14%),** and **Oak Knoll (11%)**. These regions contribute unique characteristics to the wine. Carneros, with morning and evening breezes from San Pablo Bay, adds bright citrus and minerality, while the **Arcadia Vineyard** in Coombsville lends a floral perfume and delicate fruit character. The Oak Knoll fruit provides flavors of **apple and pear**, and grapes from Atlas Peak contribute a **richer mouthfeel and citrusy lemon-lime essence**.

The 2022 vintage was challenging due to continued drought conditions and a record-setting heat wave during harvest. The growing season began with unusual spring weather, including an April frost and a rainstorm in June, which reduced yields but ultimately concentrated flavors. Despite the weather challenges, careful vineyard management resulted in high-quality, ripe fruit with a balanced acid structure.

Winemaking

The **2022 Karia Chardonnay** was crafted to accentuate fresh fruit while maintaining a light touch of oak. Grapes were **hand-picked early in the morning** to retain coolness and immediately **whole-cluster pressed** to preserve freshness. Fermentation was conducted primarily in **French oak barrels (96%)**, with the remaining **4% in stainless steel** to maintain bright acidity. Approximately **32% of the wine underwent malolactic fermentation**, which softened the acidity and added a hint of creaminess.

The wine was then aged **sur lie for nine months**, with **35% new French oak, 61% older French oak**, and **4% stainless steel**. This process provided a subtle oak influence and enriched the mouthfeel without overpowering the Chardonnay's fresh fruit character.

Alcohol :14,50 %

Composition: 100% Chardonnay

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Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Pale gold.
- **Aroma**: Fragrant with ripe mango, honeydew melon, and peach, accented by hints of key lime pie, apple, and delicate floral notes.
- **Palate**: Medium-bodied with a bright, fruit-driven profile, featuring flavors of tropical melon, citrus, and a touch of creamy vanilla spice. The finish is long and refreshing, with lingering citrus and melon notes.

Did you know?

The name **Karia** comes from the Greek word for "graceful," reflecting the wine's elegant and balanced character. This Chardonnay showcases the artistry of blending grapes from multiple Napa Valley sub-regions to create a wine that is both complex and approachable.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Grilled chicken with lemon aioli**: The wine's citrus and tropical fruit notes complement the lemony flavors and richness of the aioli.
- **Grilled salmon with cucumber, tomato, and fresh dill salsa**: The Chardonnay's bright acidity balances the fresh and herbaceous salsa, enhancing the salmon's richness.
- **Roast chicken breast stuffed with spinach and feta**: The creamy, savory flavors of the stuffing harmonize with the wine's ripe fruit and subtle vanilla notes.

93 WineEnthusiast

Wine Enthusiast (WE) : 93 Points (2022)

Aromas of toast and butter are greeted by flavors of sweet lemon, ripe pineapple and a finish of warming spices. This generous and energetic Chardonnay coats the palate through a persistent finish.

92 James Suckling

James Suckling (JS) : 92 Points (2022)

Graceful yet full-bodied, this lightly oaked wine gains more complexity with each sip. Aromas of pear syrup, almonds and light butter lead to nicely concentrated pears, golden apples and subtle oak spices.

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Wine Spectator (WS) : 91 Points (2019)

***Wine Spectators' #8 Top Value Wine of 2021** Many leading producers of Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon also make Chardonnay, and one of the best of the pack comes from Stag's Leap Wine Cellars. Winemaker Marcus Notaro blends fruit from vineyards in southern Napa Valley to make this voluptuously juicy-tasting version that stays fresh with rich acidity. It's been his goal over the past few years with Karia (the ancient Greek word for "graceful") to align the winemaking more tightly to the vineyard. From Oak Knoll and Atlas Peak, where he thinks the Chardonnay fruit is richer, Notaro taps more new wood for barrel-fermenting and aging. With fruit from the cooler Coombsville and Carneros appellations, he doesn't use malolactic fermentation, thus preserving the natural acidity that malo softens. Notaro also relies on more native yeast for the fermentations to add complexity. He then balances the lots together, accentuating the best characteristics of each in the final blend. (KM)*