La Crema

La Crema Monterey Chardonnay 2023 captures Monterey's long, cool growing season in a luscious, finely balanced style, layering papaya, honeydew and key lime over subtle barrel spice for a richly satisfying glass with irresistible freshness.

LA CREMA

Monterey Chardonnay 2023

California, USA

89 Wine Spectator

Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 100% Chardonnay

Region and Vineyards

Monterey is one of California's most compelling cool-climate wine regions, shaped by the **Pacific Ocean and deep offshore Monterey Canyon**. Cold water, fog and persistent afternoon winds funnel inland through the Salinas Valley, moderating sunshine and creating a **long, measured ripening season**. For Chardonnay, these conditions encourage ripe orchard and tropical fruit while helping retain the acidity that gives the wine its lively, food-friendly finish.

The 2023 fruit was sourced from vineyards across the Monterey appellation, allowing La Crema to combine several expressions of the region. The vintage followed a cool, wet winter that replenished soil moisture, then a cooler growing season that extended hang time and delayed the Chardonnay harvest until 7 October, around three weeks later than in 2022. Predominantly **free-draining loam soils** support balanced vine growth, while the slow season promoted concentrated flavors, fresh acidity and refined development.

Winemaking

La Crema Monterey Chardonnay 2023 is made from **100% Chardonnay** sourced throughout the appellation. After harvest, the grapes were **gently pressed and settled for 24 hours** before the juice was racked into barrels for fermentation. This approach builds a rounded texture and integrates oak from the beginning, while preserving the wine's bright citrus and tropical fruit profile.

The wine then matured in barrel for **four to five months**, using a cooperage mix of 70% French oak and 30% American oak. The influence is polished rather than dominant, framing the fruit with gentle spice and breadth. The finished wine has 13.5% alcohol, a pH of 3.52, total acidity of 5.8 g/L and residual sugar of 0.4 g/L. Made under winemaker Craig McAllister, it was bottled on 20 May 2024.

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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Bright pale gold with lemon highlights, showing youthful clarity and an inviting sheen.
- **Aroma:** Expressive grilled pineapple, citrus blossom, tangerine and papaya are joined by lemon glaze, ripe apple and a delicate suggestion of warm barrel spice.
- **Palate:** Smooth and rounded, with generous white peach, honeydew melon and ripe citrus flavors. Key lime acidity brings freshness, while subtle oak spice, creamy texture and a cool river-stone character shape the lingering finish.

Did you know?

La Crema was founded in 1979 under the name **La Crema Viñera**, meaning "best of the vine." The estate extended its exploration of cool-climate vineyards into Monterey in 2008, attracted by the region's fog, persistent coastal winds and prolonged growing season.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Dungeness crab:** The crab's delicate sweetness mirrors the wine's white peach and tropical fruit, while citrus acidity refreshes the palate between bites.
- **Pan-seared petrale sole:** The Chardonnay's creamy texture complements the fish's tenderness, while key lime and mineral notes provide lift and definition.
- **Herb-roasted chicken:** Golden roasted flavors harmonize with the barrel spice, while the wine's ripe fruit and acidity balance the richness of the meat.
- **Manchego cheese:** The cheese's nutty, savory character draws out the wine's oak-derived spice, creamy mouthfeel and lingering citrus freshness.

89 Wine Spectator

Wine Spectator (WS) : 89 Points (2023)

Smooth and plump, with an appealing seamlessness to the spice, melon, lemon zest and ripe peach flavors.

89 WineEnthusiast

Wine Enthusiast (WE) : 89 Points (2022)

Baked peach and almond brittle aromas make for a toasty, warm entry to the nose of this bottling. The palate is waxy and viscous in texture, showing generous peach and lemon flavors. (Matt Kettmann)