

Freemark Abbey

With poise and energy, this Chardonnay reflects Freemark Abbey's heritage of crafting age-worthy white wines from expressive Napa terroirs.

FREEMARK ABBEY
NAPA VALLEY

94
James Suckling



Alcohol :14,50 %

Composition: 100% Chardonnay

Chardonnay 2023

California, USA

Region and Vineyards

The fruit for the Freemark Abbey Chardonnay comes from select vineyards located in Napa Valley's southern appellations, where marine influence is paramount. Carneros, cooled by breezes from San Pablo Bay, offers extended ripening that preserves acidity and develops nuanced aromatics. Rancho Sarco, near the town of Napa, adds richness and ripeness, while Huichica Vineyard, nestled in the hills of Napa Carneros, provides freshness and minerality.

These sites are planted in **gravelly clay loam and sedimentary soils**, with vine ages ranging from **14 to 28 years**. This diversity in site and soil creates a complex blend of fruit character, texture, and structural elegance. The unique microclimates across these vineyards shape a wine that is both generous and refreshing, reflecting Napa's cooler subregions at their best.

Winemaking

This 100% Chardonnay was **whole cluster pressed** and underwent both barrel and tank fermentation to enhance its depth and freshness. **78% of the blend was fermented in French oak barrels**, of which **43% were new**, contributing subtle toast, spice, and creamy texture. The remaining 22% was fermented in stainless steel to preserve fruit purity.

The wine was aged for **9 months on the lees** with regular bâtonnage (stirring), enriching the mid-palate and enhancing integration. Alcohol sits at **14.5%**, with a pH of 3.5 and a total acidity of 5.4 g/L. Bottled in July 2023, it reflects the character of a vintage marked by drought, heat spikes, and a return to cooler harvest conditions—producing wines of clarity, balance, and expressive fruit.

Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Pale straw with golden highlights.
- **Aroma**: Aromas of Honeycrisp apple, Meyer lemon zest, brioche, and white flowers, underpinned by hints of vanilla and toasted hazelnut.
- **Palate**: Creamy yet vibrant, with flavors of Anjou pear, tropical fruits, lemon curd, and subtle oak spice. The wine glides across the palate with a plush texture balanced by bright acidity and a long, harmonious finish.

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Did you know?

Freemark Abbey, founded in 1886, was one of the first Napa wineries to bottle a varietal Chardonnay. Their white wines gained international attention when they competed in the 1976 "Judgment of Paris"—a pivotal moment that helped redefine Napa's place on the world wine map. This 2022 release continues that legacy with a modern interpretation of **site-driven Chardonnay**.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Roast chicken with lemon and thyme**: Echoes the wine's citrus and herbal notes while complementing its creamy texture.
- **Lobster risotto**: The richness of the dish finds a perfect match in the wine's round mouthfeel and oak nuances.
- **Miso-glazed black cod**: Umami depth and sweetness enhance the tropical fruit and acidity in the glass.
- **Triple-cream Brie or Camembert**: A classic cheese pairing that mirrors the wine's plush and balanced style.

94 James Suckling

James Suckling (JS) : 94 Points (2023)

Beautifully layered and slightly rich yet well balanced. A luxurious but fresh-tasting wine that leads with toasted almonds and brown butter, then crisp apples and Bosc pears. Winemaker Kristy Melton goes for a middle ground between ripeness and nervy austerity, so this wine reaches a deft balance.

93

Robert Parker (RP) : 93 Points (2023)

A fine value for Napa Cahrdonnay, Freemark Abbey's 2023 Chardonnay was barrel fermented in 44% new French oak. Lovely cinnamon and nutmeg notes join a hint of pineapple custard, lime and just a bit of peach on the nose, while the full-bodied palate is rather broad and expansive but not over the top, with a bright, zesty lime-like finish. Around half the blend comes from an old-vine site in eastern Napa (planted 1978), with the balance from Coombsville and Carneros.