

Review Overview

Babcock Chardonnay

(Santa Barbara County & Rita's Earth Cuvee)

2005 Vintage

Robert Parker's The Wine Advocate Aug 2006

SCORE: 90 points

The 2005 Chardonnay Rita's Earth Cuvee displays a greenish hue to its light gold/straw color, attractive notes of orange and tangerine blossoms, crisp acidity, full-bodied, juicy fruit, and a subtle touch of wood. This is a tasty, terroir-driven white to drink over the next 1-2 years.

Wine Enthusiast Magazine 11/15/06

SCORE: 88 points

Very ripe and zingy in fresh kiwi, Key lime pie and vanilla flavors, with great acidity, this Chard could be mistaken for an Edna Valley. But it's a blend of six Santa Barbara vineyards. A bit of barrel fermentation makes it creamy and pie-crust buttery. — S.H.

2004 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast Magazine Dec 15, 2005

SCORE: 91 points/Editor's Choice

The first bottling of this particular cuvee, this Chardonnay is a great expression of Santa Barbara terroir, fresh, young, and racy. The flavors are explosive and complex, suggesting wildly ripe tropical fruits and key lime pie, with refreshingly bright acidity and rich oak and lees nuances. It's a big assertive New World Chard, and a great value.

Wine Spectator Dec 15, 2005

SCORE: 90 points/Smart Buy

Intense and vibrant, with rich, concentrated layers of green apple, fig and ripe pear that are sharply focused, riding a lively beam of acidity that cleanses your palate, revealing extra nuances of flavor. Drink now.

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine Jan 2006

SCORE: 87 points - 1 out of 3 "Puffs"

While its oak and mineral aromas are a bit tentative with regard to fruit, this bottling comes through on the palate with ample, green-apple fruitiness played against touches of sweet oak and stony spice. It is crisply balanced and still on the tight side, but it should soften a bit and will benefit by another twelve months of time in the bottle.

2003 Vintage

Wine Spectator 7/31/05

SCORE: 86 points

Quince, pineapple and lemon-lime flavors have a very good intensity, with cedary vanilla nuances accenting the crisp finish. Drink now through 2006. — J.L.

2002 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast Magazine 2/03

SCORE: 87 points

A clean, focused Chard, with tightly wound flavors of citrus fruits, apples and peaches. Oak adds notes of vanilla, buttered toast and smoke. Particularly nice for its crisp acids and firm balance. — S.H.

2002 Vintage

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine 12/03

SCORE: 88 points - 1 Puff (out of 3)

Mild, lightly floral and suggesting a sweet, honeyed quality, this carefully oaked bottling is consistent from first engaging sniff to clean, restrained finish. Intended to be a wine for the here and now, it is reliable Chardonnay at every stop and will hold up well in the bottle for a year or two.

2001 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast Magazine 12/15/02

SCORE: 93 points/Editor's Choice

Bright, forward acids and lean fruit characterize this flinty white wine. The flavors are of citrus and minerals, with riper suggestions of peaches, and are enriched with smoky oak. This Chablis-style Chardonnay is complex and one of the year's greatest values. Enjoy it with shellfish. — S.H.

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine 10/02

SCORE: 88 points - 1 Puff (out of 3)

The usually reliable Mr. Babcock has come through again, this time with a moderately rich, highly presentable Chardonnay. Its aromas of ripened apples, stones and creamy oak are paralleled in medium-depth flavors that are a bit on the briskly balanced side but never lose their sense of fruit or their varietal focus. Keep this one in mind.

2000 Vintage

Robert M. Parker's The Wine Advocate 6-29-02

SCORE: 87 points - VERY GOOD

The medium-bodied 2000 Chardonnay exhibits pear/pineapple fruit, spicy oak, and underlying minerality. This French-styled Chardonnay should drink well for 2-3 years.

Wine Enthusiast Magazine 11/15/01

SCORE: 87 points Concentrated and intense, it's marked by stylish tropical fruit flavors and quite a dose of smoky oak. There's a mineral streak right down the middle that gives it a steely spine, and refreshing acidity adds to the structural integrity. — S.H.

1999 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast Magazine 2/01

SCORE: 88 points

This is the workhorse release from an always dependable producer, and it's excellent. Not enormously complex or layered, but very ripe; it offers up-front peach flavors veering into tropical fruit with a solid dose of smoky oak that adds nuance. Vibrant and alive, with high acidity that endows it with marvelous structure.

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine 5/01

SCORE: 87 points - 1 Puff (out of 3)

In all truth, we would like to see a bit more central fruit at work here, but the wine's slightly oily feel, it's lightly tropical traits and its plump open manner nevertheless make it very easy to like. It does not have the build or balance of a wine destined for long-term improvement, and its recommendation comes as a near-term drinker.

1999 Vintage

Santa Barbara News-Press 6/15/01

SCORE: A GREAT BUY - Dennis Schaefer

Babcock's 1999 Chardonnay, Santa Barbara County, is the finest "regular" Chard he has ever made. Apple, melon, peach and citrus aromas are backed by spicy oak. At this point, the flavors are still concentrated and tightly wound, though tropical fruit, peach skins and minerals come through. Texturally complex mid-palate, you can really feel the wine's concentration. The oak spice is just right and in tune with the boldness of the fruit. To my taste, this is nearly "Grand Cuvée" quality at the bargain price of \$18.00.

1998 Vintage

Restaurant Wine

SCORE: 4 STARS (out of 5)

Full yellow color. An intensely flavored, full bodied Chardonnay with firm acidity, and complex character (pineapple, honey, oak). 2000-2001. — Ronn Weigand

1997 Vintage

Steve Tanzer's International Wine Cellar 12/98

SCORE: 89 points

Pale color. Perfumed aromas of dried fruit, peach, truffle, and white chocolate. Full but fairly bright in the mouth with pit fruit, truffle and herbal flavors. Large-scaled but juicy and nicely focused. Finishes with a strong oak component and flavor of pear.