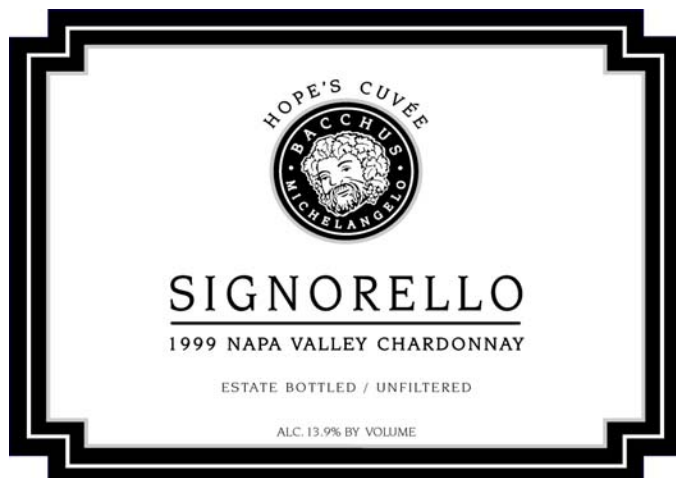


1999 Chardonnay Hope's Cuvée



100% Napa Valley Chardonnay, Estate Grown

Harvested at 24.2 Brix, between September 24-30, 1999

13.9% Alcohol

0.61 TA/3.4 pH

43 Cases Produced

Release Date February 2000

HARVEST NOTES: The 1999 Napa Valley growing season was long and cool allowing us to harvest extraordinarily clean, healthy grapes with excellent acidity and mature varietal fruit flavors. With growing conditions in 1999 similar to 1998, but cooler, grape clusters were very healthy with no sunburn. This year Napa Valley experienced its typical difference in daytime (warm) and evening (cool) temperatures the create optimal conditions for the development of balanced sugar and acid levels. Other than a trace of precipitations in mid September, rain was not an issue in 1999. Yields averaged 1.8 tons/acre in 1999.

WINEMAKING NOTES: Careful pressing of whole clusters minimized skin contact. The gentle process helped the wine achieve balance, develop a silky mouth-fell and enhanced aging potential. Using native yeasts, the wine fermented in French oak barrels with 100% of the wine undergoing a second, malolactic fermentation. Tonnelleriers: Sirugue, François Freres and de Billion. Oak types: Allier, Trancais and Vosges. The wine spent eleven months on the lees in French oak (60% new) followed by racking and bottling on August 11, 2000. To preserve fruit intensity and body, the wine was not filtered. The Hope's Cuvée represents the best two barrels from the entire estate program selected through extensive tastings by our Proprietor Ray Signorello Jr.

TASTING NOTES: The nose opens with intense fruit and buttered – toast aromas. Rich fruit flavors, especially of pear pineapple and peach, enhance the creamy palate. French oak provides a touch of spice with hints of clove, cinnamon and nutmeg. An apple-like crispness balances the silky toasty layers. Hope's Cuvée is very similar to our estate Chardonnay but with an extra dimension of depth concentration from the severe barrel selection. Enjoy now to 2010.

VINEYARD NOTES: This Chardonnay was grown exclusively on our estate vineyard on the east side of the Silverado Trail in the Oak Knoll area. This shallow, rocky hillside vineyard, planted in 1980, stressed the vines sufficiently during the growing season to ensure intense varietal character. We employed a variety of techniques in managing each vineyards micro-climate including vertical trellising leaf removal and crop reduction.

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