

BARDEN



Prologue

My love affair with Chardonnay was a high school crush turned into a full blown relationship. As the owner/operator of the Wine Cask Restaurant from an early age we served it to a receptive audience who was eager to try new things as long as it was Chardonnay. I was partners with two of the premier Chardonnay producers (Au Bon Climat & Qupe) and we made Chardonnay under the VITA NOVA label as well as the private label Chardonnays for Roy's, Emeril's, and the Patina Group. Chardonnay was in my blood.

I was raised on Chardonnay. It was my bread and butter – everybody wanted it and we had it, oh boy did we have it. We had every type from every land. We produced private label Chardonnays from a variety of producers that we blended for the restaurant by the glass program. Burgundy, Italy, Napa, Sonoma and the rising stars from Santa Barbara were on our lists and in our bellies. We went full blown (new oak, ripe, full ML) to light and lean (stainless steel fermented, no oak and no ML). We cherished the Chardonnay based wines of Champagne. We cellared wine so that our customers could enjoy them with bottle age – I was into it.

Then I left... I sold the restaurant, I sold my interest in VITA NOVA and my love affair with Chardonnay ended. I pursued the production of other white grapes. I left. Chardonnay, maybe the world's greatest white grape and I ended our love affair. I was angry, resentful and, as you'll read, I lashed out. I needed to leave. I needed space.

Now, fifteen years later I find a letter I had written. It was full of heartbreak and realization... It was a different time. As I prepare to release my 2014 Barden Chardonnay, the first Chardonnay I've produced, I felt it was time to share this heartfelt letter from so long ago. I am in love again and from sorrow and pain a Phoenix has risen from the ashes.

My Chardonnay is a wine from a thought. My imagining the perfect Chardonnay and crafting her and blending vineyards that are an amalgamation of memories, both distant and recent, from the numerous Chardonnays I have tasted and loved.

I hope you enjoy -

Doug