

2011

NO|CO

## CHARDONNAY

### NORTH COAST

#### STORY

Matt Lickliger & Kevin O'Connor, founders of LIOCO Winery and very much a part of the New California Wine movement, believed it possible to both make compelling wine domestically and to do so from vineyards outside the prized county of Sonoma. NoCo (an abbreviation for North Coast) is our second label focusing on wines grown in the six counties north of San Francisco (Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Solano, Lake, Mendocino). The principled philosophy which propelled LIOCO into the limelight is applied here—choice vineyard sites, clean horticulture, low yields, early harvest dates, minimalist winemaking. While Chardonnay will be a cornerstone of this label, the red offering will be more fluid—allowing for the topsy-turvy fruit market to dictate where the best values will be found.

#### AROMA

Green pear, lemon drops, wet stone

#### FLAVOR

Lemon peel, nectarine pit, mineral

#### FOOD PAIRINGS

Fish stew, lemon risotto, shrimp & grits

#### VINIFICATION

A severe triage was made in the vineyard under the watchful eye of vineyard manager Mark Neal. It was hand-harvested and whole cluster pressed to tank. The wine was fermented in 100% stainless steel (**No Oak**) on wild yeasts. It completed a slow, naturally occurring malolactic fermentation and was stirred on its fine lees in tank for six months before bottling, which was done via a gentle cross-flow filtration.

#### SITE

Two premier North Coast sites compose this wine. The first, Valentine Vineyard sits with one foot in Sonoma and the other in Mendocino. It runs alongside and is largely influenced by the Mendocino River. It thusly reminds us of some choice Chardonnay sites in the Russian River Valley AVA (though the Valentine Vineyard is Mendocino AVA). The vines are 30-years old. The clone is Chardonnay Clone 4, which is a "weather adapted" version of the prized Wente Clone. The soil is an alluvial mix of shale, clay, and sand. The second site is the Mazzeria Vineyard located in the southern reach of Sonoma's Dry Creek Valley. This vineyard benefits from tough rocky soil found where vineyards have been planted in dried up river beds. There are variety of younger vine Dijon Clones in the ground.

#### NOTES

As cold as 2010 was, 2011 was colder. It was later, wetter, and in general more challenging. There were questions about whether some of these vineyards would get ripe (again)! But for the meticulous grower and patient winemaker, there were opportunities never before seen in modern times. Opportunities to make remarkably lithe, low alcohol wines bristling with natural acidity. John Raytek handled the vineyard with a cool head. He called the right harvest dates (before the mid-Sept. rain squalls). And he elected to stir the lees all the way through malolactic fermentation, coercing balance from the tightly wound juice. This wine clearly shows the mark of a masterful Chardonnay winemaker.

#### DETAILS

County: North Coast  
Winemaker: John Raytek  
Production: 5000 cases  
Yeast: Wild  
Clones: Clone 4, assorted Dijon Clones  
Harvest dates: 09/14/11  
Bottling Date: 04/10/12

Ph: 3.51  
Brix: 22.4  
Total acidity: 7.2 g/l  
Residual sugar: 0.02 g/l  
Alcohol: 13.3%

