

# Brewer - Clifton



## The 1999 Vintage

Our thanks and appreciation go to David Russell at *Wine Cask* for his tasting notes, written for the Wine Cask Futures events in Spring 2000.

### **1999 Brewer-Clifton Katherine's chardonnay Santa Maria Valley**

The fanatical duo of Greg Brewer and Steve Clifton got the pick of Katherine's vineyard in '99 – Block A1 to be exact (next to Bien Nacido), which has a vein of gravel guaranteed to stress any vine, including the twenty-year old Wente clones that are planted here. They got less than two tons per acre off the vines. At tasting time, the wine was still going through ML (the grapes were harvested in December!), but the richness that its heritage implies was evident, with depth and concentration of fruit in the nose and lovely minerals on the palate. 70 cases produced.

### **1999 Brewer-Clifton Sweeney Canyon chardonnay Santa Ynez Valley**

As much a reflection of its soil as the Katherine's, this shows the Santa Ynez riverbank rockiness – as Greg says, "It looks like the surface of the moon." Slightly riper fruit, more lees-infused (from Montrachet yeast). To be bottled during the waning moon after the Summer solstice. The classiest of all their chardonnays – tremendous mouthfeel. 120 cases produced.

### **1999 Brewer-Clifton Marcella's chardonnay Santa Maria Valley**

This is the old Sierra Madre Vineyard that was used for the Qupe Reserve chardonnay before Fess Parker acquired the vineyard. Picked at an astonishing 25.5° brix yielding 15.5% alcohol. This has all that Santa Maria has to offer: tropical fruits, wild bananas, vanilla. A big wine. 70 cases produced.

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### **1999 Brewer-Clifton Melville pinot noir Santa Ynez Valley**

Melville is the new winery on the block, for which Greg Brewer is winemaker. Their estate pinot noir vines, right next to Babcock, are planted to the “teen Dijon” clones, 114 and 115. The Boys get 5 rows of pinot from the mesa just to the west of Brian – very windy and exposed. It requires meticulous farming, for which pains they get all of a half-ton per acre. Dark color, very raspberry nose, tight structure. 24 cases produced.

### **1999 Brewer-Clifton Julia's pinot noir Santa Maria Valley**

When tasted this wine was still going through both alcoholic and malolactic fermentations, which seems to be our Good News/Bad News mantra for this year's futures. Bad news because it's not all that easy to taste subtle components. Good news because it's great for the wines – long, slow fermentations mean deep, complex wines. This is their best Julia's ever: big color; great fruit; rich mouthfeel. Very limited. 70 cases produced.

### **1999 Brewer-Clifton Santa Maria Hills pinot noir Santa Maria Valley**

Eight-tenths of a ton per acre from thirty-year old vines. Very dark, very spicy, with bark, earth, mushrooms, Early Grey tea and loads of pinot noir fruit and flavor. A little zetz of tannin shows that this has a future in the cellar. 140 cases produced.