

Las Jaras Wines

2022 CHARBONO

Mendocino County | Old Vines

In 2019 we got a cigar shaped amphora and in 2021 we got a jar shaped one; and the rest is history. There is a small block of old vine Charbono at the Gary Venturi Vineyard. This is a variety that was found all over the North Coast in the mid-century until it was pulled out to make room for other varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon. It's a late ripening and low acid variety that makes a wine that is big, dark and soft. We like to experiment with it, so in 2017 we made a sans soufre carbonic version and in 2019 we made a carbonic version that was aged in an amphora for two years. We found it quite interesting to age charbono in an oxidative vessel that was not oak. The variety soaks up oak and it tends to make a really rich, soft wine with a bit of oxidized character. Aged in amphora, it turned out so pure and delicious. For our 2022 version of this wine we added a high temp amphora which is not as oxidative, and a few neutral oak barrels.

Our 2022 Mendocino County Charbono opens up with a nose of boysenberry, bing cherry and subtle cocoa nibs. It has a mineral expression on the palate with violet, black plum and marionberry notes coming through. There is plenty of fine-grained tannin and a deep, dark richness through the finish.

The label, created by pizza legend Joe Beddia says: Bonarda, Charbono, Douce Noir. These are all analogues of the same variety; local lingo for what we call Charbono. It is a grape from the Haute Savoie region in the French Alps.

Vineyard: This is a single-vineyard wine, the grapes coming from the Gary Venturi Vineyard in the Calpella area of Mendocino County, near Ukiah. The vineyard is on the benchlands to the west of the valley, and is farmed by Gary himself. These old vines were planted in the mid-1950s. The vineyard is dry-farmed organically. The soils are Yokayo series sandy loam that is very well drained. Due to Gary's fastidious suckering and canopy management, this is an incredibly clean vineyard, and gets only one or two sulfur dustings per season. 2021 was a vintage with very low yields, so the wine is quite a bit richer than ones we have made in the past. The wine is unmistakably Charbono in character.

Winemaking: We had a quite warm growing season, but our grapes got plenty of hangtime before we picked them at 23 brix. When the hand-picked grapes arrived at the winery, we dumped them into a tank for carbonic maceration. No sulfur was added and we kept the tank jacket set at 52°F. after 11 days, we dug out the tank and pressed the grapes. We put the pressed wine into a small warm tank for fermentation with 15ppm SO₂. Once the tank was dry, we transferred the wine to a cigar shaped 500L terra cotta amphora, a 500L jar amphora and 4 neutral barrels for aging. The wines were aged in a cool room where the wines underwent native malolactic fermentation. We racked the barrels about two weeks before bottling. The wine was bottled without fining or filtration.



Label Art by Joe Beddia

Production: 200 cases

*ABV: 13.52% | TA: 5.06 g/L | pH: 3.82 | VA: 0.54 g/L | DCO₂: 560ppm
Total SO₂: 44ppm | RS: 0.7 g/L | Turbidity at bottling: 18 NTU*