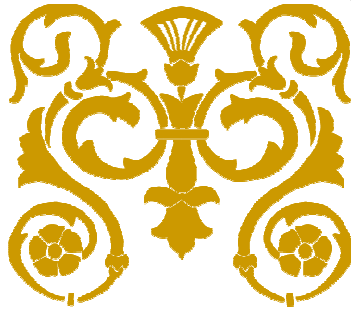


Brewer - Clifton



The 1998 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 1999.

Greg Brewer and Steve Clifton continue their meteoric rise (these '98s are only their third vintage) to the zenith of the Santa Barbara wine firmament. These guys are complete freaks about the notion that great wine is made in the vineyard. In some cases, such as Wes Hagen at Clos Pepe out in Lompoc, the vineyard owner is equally nutball and fanatical; in other instances, the boys may get creative, bribing the vineyard manager with wine (B-C, of course) and beer in order to ensure that certain yield reducing steps are taken, to gain access to the best sections (!) of the best rows, etc. Even after all this, the grapes are subjected to a final, maniacal culling at a sorting table as they come into the winery. Your basic obsessed stalker mentality redirected into more socially redeeming ends...

1998 Brewer-Clifton Clos Pepe chardonnay Santa Ynez Valley

Harvested at about a ton per acre, this wine is a little shy on the nose, but surprisingly big, ripe, fleshy and round on the attack. The flavors get nice and mineral, and I really dig the feel on the palate. 48 cases produced.

1998 Brewer-Clifton Katherine's chardonnay Santa Maria Valley

From Cambria Katherine's plot. Much leesier in the aromas than the Clos Pepe. Wonderfully soul-inflected in the mouth, where that gravelly, alluvial soil comes through loud and clear. Not so much fruit-driven as site-driven, which appeals to the Burgundy freak in me. 75 cases produced.

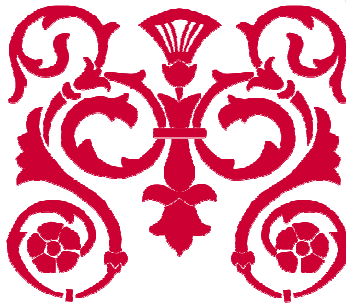
1998 Brewer-Clifton Marcella's chardonnay Santa Maria Valley

From the north end of G-block of what used to be called Sierra Madre Vineyard, east of Santa Maria. Totally different from the preceding: slight caramel/toffee oak notes dominate the fruit at this moment. A little richer and broader in the mouth, with the pineapple and lemon notes that were missing on the nose. 48 cases produced.

1998 Brewer-Clifton Sweeney Canyon chardonnay Santa Ynez Valley

Complex aromas of toast, applesauce, and wet stones. Uncanny sweetness of perfectly ripe fruit in the front of the mouth, giving way to an almost electric charge of acidity that lends brilliance and clarity. Even with substantial acids, however, this is the richest and most palate-coating of these four chardonnays. 48 cases produced.

Brewer - Clifton



The 1998 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 1999.

1998 Brewer-Clifton Julia's pinot noir Santa Maria Valley

The result of a laborious ten-hour picking. The grapes were not destemmed, underwent a three-day cold soak, and a three-week cuvaison. Still some fermentation aromas, but underneath is really pretty, wild cherry fruit. Much more voluptuous in the mouth than last year's wine at the same stage. The tannins are riper and more well hidden. Terrific sweetness on the back end. 80 cases produced.

1998 Brewer-Clifton Santa Maria Hills Santa Maria Valley

By local standards, this is practically a *cuvée vieilles vignes* (old vines *cuvée* – the vines here are 30 years old). Deeper in hue than the Julia's, and at this point has come closer to falling clear. Wonderfully sappy, concentrated, confiture of red fruits on the nose. Impressive breadth and amplitude in the mouth, and already showing considerable complexity, with a *mélange* of red fruits, exotic herb and spice elements, and a hint of Darjeeling tea. None of this will be lost at bottling, which will be done by hand, unfiltered (the regimen for all these wines). 85 cases produced.