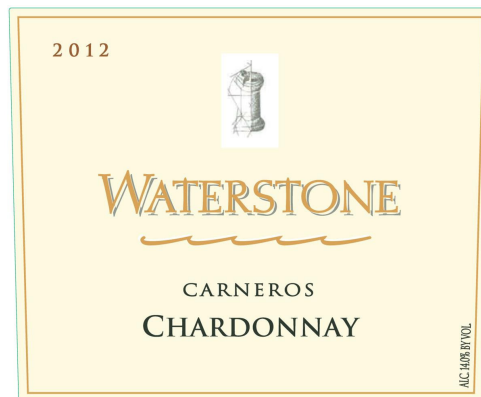




Friday, July 4, 2014
Steffen Rasch



I also want to give a shout-out to a great Chardonnay I recently sampled: the 2012 Waterstone. The grapes for this wine are sourced from two different vineyards in Carneros, California. The grapes were not destemmed but pressed whole cluster and fermented in a barrel. After fermentation the wine spent 6 months (in the same barrels) aging on the dead yeasts with routine stirring. Blending the parts of the Chardonnay that are in contact with the yeasts and the oak with the rest of the juice increases the complexity of the flavors and adds richness to the wine.

Reading the way this wine is made one would think that this has to be a super oaky and over-the-top buttery Chardonnay (did I mention that half the barrels used were new?). Well, it is not! This wine manages to get the balance of bright concentrated fruit, richness, acidity and oak just right. The reason is the climate where the fruit is grown. While Carneros AVA technically includes parts of Sonoma and Napa counties, the regions proximity to the San Pablo Bay (with its cooling fogs and breezes) makes it much more moderate than for example Napa Valley AVA which is further inland. The fruit is less ripe at harvest which means that the grapes retains much of their acidity – a key ingredient to any wine, especially one that is barrel-fermented and aged in (partially) new oak. This wine is absolutely delicious and very well-made. For under \$20 this wine is absolutely a steal!

Cheers!