



PRIVATE CELLAR

Joseph Phelps Vineyards and Freestone Winery

Despite radically different climates, the wines from Joseph Phelps' Napa vineyards and Freestone's vines on the Sonoma Coast clearly display their common parentage stylistically with their purity and clarity of fruit and the sheer attention to detail which is so often lacking in many a Californian wine. Never afraid to experiment in the pursuit of excellence, and prepared to accept the steep learning curve which comes hand in hand with breaking new ground, these wines are increasingly being recognised as leaders in their field, gaining top scores from Robert Parker (97-100 for Insignia 2007, 89-93 for Freestone), the Wine Spectator (90+) and the Wine Enthusiast (94). No matter how much one approves or disapproves of the points systems, these are spectacular accolades.

Joseph Phelps Vineyards, Napa Valley

Having made the radical move in 2004 to use only estate grown fruit for their flagship Insignia, rather than buying in from other growers, the challenge for Phelps was to make an ever more superior wine in order to justify the change. In fact, all of their wines have a concentration and intensity which illustrate their attention to detail in their vineyards as they move over towards biodynamic practices. Both the Cabernet and the Insignia in 2007 are outstanding and we can't recommend them highly enough and their 2009 Sauvignon Blanc, with tiny production, is delicious.

The 2007 growing season in Napa was considerably drier than usual with early budbreak and flowering leading to a good, even fruit set. Summer was dry and warm without excessive heat however the dry conditions led to an earlier harvest than normal, with small bunches giving a yield around 30% lower than usual. The quality of the vintage is superb, rated one of the best by Phelps, certainly as good as the 2006 and probably better.

Freestone Winery, Sonoma Coast

The Freestone vineyards on the Sonoma Coast are now ten years old and have really found their footing, thanks to Burgundy-influenced winemaker Theresa Heredia. The naturally cooler climate with regular fog incursions from the sea particularly favours Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, varieties which benefit from long, cool growing seasons and which particularly relish cool nights after sunny days.

The 2007 growing season on the Sonoma Coast was similar to that in Napa, with a very dry winter leading to early budbreak auguring an early harvest. The dryness continued through the summer, with some heat spikes in the early part and the warmth building during August. 6th September saw the beginning of the Pinot harvest but as the weather cooled down significantly harvesting was suspended to allow further ripening, with the balance of the crop brought in towards the end of the month.

2008 again saw lower than average rainfall, combined with a spell of higher than normal temperatures on the Sonoma Coast in spite of which the fruit sell well and an abundant harvest was on the cards. Nature, however, had other ideas and a sharp frost in late March / early April devastated Freestone's Chardonnay crop, destroying around 50% of the grapes. Extreme heat throughout the summer (100°F +) led to wildfires throughout California, but thankfully Freestone's proximity to the coast meant that their vineyards were unaffected by either fire or taint from the smoke. The challenge in such a hot year such as 2008 is to harvest before the fruit desiccates and the Pinot Noir was picked early, between 3rd and 27th September, with a longer harvest for the Chardonnay, ending on 1st October. In spite of the heat, the 2008s are vibrant, balanced and aromatic with Theresa's Burgundian influences showing through in the finished wines.

Nicola Arcedeckne-Butler MW
September 2010

Tasting Notes

Freestone Winery, Sonoma Coast

Fog Dog Chardonnay 2008 £110 per case of 6 under bond

Pale gold, with ripe, white fruits on the nose, creamy with a light touch of toasty new wood, very alluring. On the palate creamy white fruits again, sweet, plump and with juicy new wood notes, rich with lovely acidity to balance. Almost playful, but serious enough to keep for a couple of years too. From 2010

Freestone Chardonnay 2008 £165 per case of 6 under bond

Pale gold, with a more perfumed yet restrained nose than the Fog Dog, with buttery white fruits behind. Tight, citrusy fruit on the palate, very elegant with a hint of oriental sweetness behind going to a rich, lemony finish. Very much the grown-up. From 2011

Fog Dog Pinot Noir 2008 £110 per case of 6 under bond

Deep red black to a lighter rim, with a spicy, classically Pinot nose of maturing red fruits. Fresh black fruits on the palate, a touch closed at first but opening out to a ripe, developing finish. Approachable already, it ideally needs another couple of years to reach its full potential. From 2011

Freestone Pinot Noir 2007 £165 per case of 6 under bond

Deep red black right to the rim, with a gorgeously perfumed nose of rich, jammy black fruits and perfumed new wood. Truly luscious on the nose. Sweet and rich on the palate with chocolaty black fruits, textured, with very supple tannins behind, still very youthful. From 2012, this will develop over the next three to ten years. Spectacular. From 2012



Joseph Phelps Vineyards, Napa Valley

Phelps Napa Cabernet Sauvignon 2007 £155 per case of 6 under bond

Dense, dense black red right to the rim, very concentrated and semi-opaque. Juicy black fruit on the nose, strongly redolent of black wine gums, very appealing and youthful. Dense, primary black fruits on the palate, fresh yet rich, concentrated and incredibly young. Initially appears less opulent than other vintages at the same stage, but then develops and expands on the finish. Lovely, subtle. From 2012

Insignia 2007 £620 per case of 6 under bond

Dense red black right to the rim, opaque in colour. Fresh, tight, blackcurrant fruit on the nose with some vanillin and new wood, very closed yet promising exciting things. Dense, silky black fruit on the palate with substantial supple tannins behind, rich, layered, mouth-coating with a long, blackcurrant finish which grows and grows. Very closed at present but with huge substance behind, destined for a long life. From 2016 and for a long time thereafter.



See the order form for magnums!

Order Form Joseph Phelps Vineyards and Freestone Winery

Wine	Bottles per case	£ per case under bond	No. of cases required	£ Total
Joseph Phelps Sauvignon Blanc 2009	6	£95		
Joseph Phelps Cabernet Sauvignon 2007	6	£155		
Joseph Phelps Cabernet Sauvignon MAGNUMS 2007	6	£320		
Insignia, Joseph Phelps Vineyards 2007	6	£620		
Insignia, Joseph Phelps Vineyards MAGNUMS 2007	3	£630		
Fog Dog Chardonnay, Freestone Winery 2008	6	£110		
Fog Dog Pinot Noir, Freestone Winery 2008	6	£110		
Freestone Chardonnay, Freestone Winery 2008	6	£165		
Freestone Pinot Noir, Freestone Winery 2007	6	£165		
Total:				

Payment Details

I enclose a cheque for the amount of £ _____ made payable to Private Cellar Ltd.

Please charge my credit card number: _____
(Visa, MasterCard, Switch, Maestro)

Start Date: _____ Expiry Date: _____ Security No: _____

Issue No: _____ Signature: _____

Delivery and Account Address Details

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Daytime Telephone Number: _____

This offer closes on Friday 26th November 2010 and the wines will be shipped in January 2011. Please indicate what you would like us to do with your wines when they arrive:

- Please store my wines under bond with Private Cellar Reserves Ltd
- Please deliver my wines to my account address*

* Please note that Duty and VAT are payable when your wines are released for delivery to your home address. Duty is currently £20.25 per case of 12 bottles / 6 magnums and £10.13 per case of 6 bottles before VAT.