



# Clos Du Val 2006 Chardonnay

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Once in a while, you have to lift your sights -- taste what the benchmarks are so you have a proper perspective on everything else. So it is with this Clos du Val Chard, produced by a renowned veteran grower off vineyards you might call the "gold coast." Carneros is cooler than Napa, which slows and lengthens the ripening period, making it ideal for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. This wine is a perfect marriage of high-quality fruit and French wood barrels: The toast on the barrels is still prominent, giving a "creme brulee" character to the nose. Underneath the toast, you get the intense tropical fruit -- pear, peach and citrus. On the palate, you get wonderful fruit acidity balancing the effect of the wood, and vibrant fruit flavors. In its own way, it's as bold and expressive as a Cabernet. It's got so much presence, you have to carefully match it with food - - perhaps pounded veal cutlets, an Italian risotto, or plump-cooked chicken breasts in a cream sauce. It's a wine to sip and savor, and think about.

CLOS DU VAL

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