

MERRIMAN'S

KAPALUA

WINES BY THE GLASS

Feb 28, 2023

WHITE

Grgich Hills Estate, Chardonnay, Napa Valley, California, 2020

\$32/gls, \$128/btl



More than just a way to hopefully sell a lot of higher-end chardonnay by the glass, this opens up an opportunity (Hi Brendan!) to learn a bit about a specific California chardonnay with a legacy to tell of.

Miljenko "Mike" Grgić was winemaker at Chateau Montelena when their 1973 chardonnay was selected to be part of the now-famous 1976 Judgment of Paris blind tasting, in which high-end French producers predicted their American counterparts to fail. The Montelena chardonnay won the white wine tasting, beating French wineries including Roulot and Leflaive, whose wines even now command 4-6 times the price of Grgich Hills.

Grgić struck out on his own in 1977 to create Grgich Hills Estate, and he has been an integral part of fashioning elegant, Old World-style wines in Napa Valley. He will turn 100 on April 1, having handed the winemaking reins long ago to his nephew Ivo Jeramaz. All the vineyards were certified organic in 2003, with the hope of creating a small but mighty self-sufficient ecosystem.

- **Grape:** 100% chardonnay
- **Winemaking:** Fermented in stainless steel tanks. No malolactic fermentation! Aged for 10 months in French oak barrels (40% new).
- **Profile:** Medium-bodied, bright, and nuanced. Not a butter bomb but will satisfy a soccer mom, with smoky and toasty notes accenting the citrusy, herbaceous, and tropical overtones.