



WINEMAKER: Ken Brown

VINEYARD SOURCE: 100% Nielson Vineyard, Santa Maria Valley. Planted by pioneer, Uriel Nielson in 1964, this property is Santa Barbara County's oldest vineyard. A portion of the fruit comes from the original vines, planted to the acclaimed Wente clone. These small, intensely flavored berries bring concentration and complexity to the wine. The balance of the grapes comes from newer plantings, which contribute a broad palette of vibrant fruit aromas and flavors.

VINTAGE: The 2005 vintage was characterized by plentiful winter rainfall, mild temperatures and a gradual ripening of the grapes, which allowed us to pick each block at optimum maturity. The growing season began with above average rainfall, resulting in vigorous spring vine growth and healthy canopies. Growers helped keep yields in balance with careful farming, including shoot thinning and leaf pulling, to ensure excellent flavor development and concentration in the grapes. Temperatures throughout the growing season were characteristically cool with no prolonged heat spells. Chardonnay from the Nielson Vineyard was harvested on September 5.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS: This small bottling of Chardonnay comes from a vineyard I have worked with for more than 20 years. The old vines are especially expressive, so a minimalist approach to winemaking allows the character and integrity of the fruit to shine through. The grapes were hand picked and gently pressed as whole clusters. After settling in tank for 12 to 24 hours, the juice was racked to 60-gallon French oak barrels for fermentation. The wine was 100% barrel fermented with 100% malo-lactic fermentation. The Chardonnay aged *sur lie* for 11 months in French oak, with 10% new oak in the barrel mix.

This Chardonnay is silky and elegant with fresh aromas of golden delicious apple, pear and honey accented by hints of cinnamon, clove and a faint background of French oak. A rich mouth feel and opulent mid-palate are kissed by a touch of natural acidity on the finish. The excellent structure and well-defined fruit character ensure this will be a long-lived Chardonnay.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 5.42 g/l

pH: 3.47

Alcohol: 14.5%

Sugg. Retail Price: \$35.00

Production: 235 cases