



**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:** Vintage 2006 kicked off with chilly spring temperatures and rain that extended almost into May, delaying the growing season by three to four weeks. A cool summer with no major heat spikes gave way to more cool temperatures in September and October. The grapes experienced exceptionally long hang time, resulting in superb development of aromas and flavors, as well as beautiful vineyard expression. Crop yields were moderate, averaging 3.0 tons per acre. Chardonnay from the Nielson Vineyard was harvested on September 30.

**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 with native yeasts. The wine was 100% barrel fermented with 100% malo-lactic fermentation. The Chardonnay aged *sur lie* for 10 months in French oak, with 13% new oak in the barrel mix.

This Chardonnay is silky and elegant with fresh aromas of gala apple, lemon blossom and honeysuckle, which will gradually evolve into aromas of honey, pear and hazelnut as the wine develops. A rich mouth feel and opulent mid-palate are beautifully balanced by bright natural acidity, a trademark of Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay. The wine culminates in a silky, seamless finish.

#### **TECHNICAL DATA**

T.A.: 6.03 g/l

pH: 3.34

Alcohol: 14.4%

Sugg. Retail Price: \$30.00

Production: 355 cases