



**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 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 2007 growing season began with a dry winter—rainfall totals were among the lowest in over 50 years. Very cold temperatures in January combined with a cool spring caused delays in vine development, pushing the growing cycle 2 to 3 weeks behind average. Clusters were small and loose with very small berries. This allowed more sunlight penetration for superb development of flavor and aromatics. Small berries and fewer clusters also translated into lower yields per acre. Crop size was down about 30%. Chardonnay from the Nielson Vineyard was harvested on September 18.

**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 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 older French oak barrels, which imparted only a slight touch of barrel complexity and character.

**TASTING NOTES:** This Chardonnay is rich and luxurious with aromas of Bartlett pear, honeysuckle and spice, 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 a thread of natural acidity, a trademark of Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay. The wine culminates in a silky, seamless finish.

#### **TECHNICAL DATA**

T.A.: 6.8 g/l

pH: 3.29

Alcohol: 14.0%

Production: 132 cases