



**WINEMAKER:** Ken Brown

**VINEYARD SOURCE:** 100% Nielson Vineyard, Santa Maria Valley. Founded by pioneer, Uriel Nielson in 1964, this property is Santa Barbara County's oldest vineyard. The estate has been replanted using cuttings from the original old vines, which included the famed Wente clone of Chardonnay. The small, intensely flavored berries bring concentration, complexity and a broad palette of vibrant fruit aromas and flavors to the wine.

**VINTAGE:** 2008 was a standout vintage in Santa Maria Valley. Yields were below normal due in part to a freeze in January and a frost in April that affected new growth and young clusters. In addition, rainfall totals for the 2008 season were below average for the second year in a row. Lower yields equated to superb concentration and richness in the wines. Weather patterns during the harvest period could not have been better. Warm, sunny days alternated with cooler, foggy days, promoting slow, even ripening of the grapes and allowing us to select the ideal time to pick. Chardonnay from the Nielson Vineyard was harvested on September 17.

**WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS:** This small bottling of Chardonnay comes from a vineyard I have worked with for more than 25 years. The 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 French oak barrels, with 10% new French oak.

**TASTING NOTES:** This Chardonnay is rich and beautifully balanced with fresh aromas of crisp apple, pear and lemon zest accented by hints of minerality and spice. These components will gradually evolve into aromas of honey, pear and hazelnut as the wine develops. Flavors of Fuji apple, cinnamon stick and vanilla are supported by a silky elegance and natural acidity that carry through to a seamless finish.

#### **TECHNICAL DATA**

T.A.: 6.7 g/l

pH: 3.34

Alcohol: 13.6%

Production: 237 cases