



VINEYARD SOURCES: 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: 2010 turned out to be a remarkable vintage, despite a sequence of extreme weather patterns that, at the time, did not bode well for a great year. The growing season experienced a wet winter and an exceptionally cool spring and summer. Early fall brought several days of record-breaking heat, followed by a half inch of rain a week later. In hindsight, the heat spell compensated for the cool spring and summer, providing some much needed heat units, and the rain revitalized the vines so they could successfully continue the grape ripening process. Chardonnay from the Nielson Vineyard was harvested on September 27.

WINEMAKING: This small bottling of Chardonnay comes from a vineyard Ken has 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 handpicked 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. The wine was 100% barrel fermented with 100% malo-lactic fermentation. The Chardonnay aged *sur lie* for 11 months in French oak barrels, with 10% new French oak, and was bottled on October 4, 2011.

TASTING NOTES: This Chardonnay is rich and beautifully balanced with fresh aromas of Golden Delicious apple, pear and peach accented by hints of honeysuckle and spice. These components will gradually evolve into aromas of honey, pear and hazelnut as the wine develops. A silky, elegant texture intertwined with a thread of natural acidity carry through to a rich, seamless finish. As experienced in past vintages of Nielson Chardonnay, this wine will enjoy exceptional ageability.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 6.5 g/l

pH: 3.40

Alcohol: 13.8%

Production: 238 cases