



VINEYARD SOURCE: 100% *Rita's Crown Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills*. Planted in 2007, Rita's Crown is one of the newest vineyards in the Sta. Rita Hills appellation. The estate is located at an elevation of 600 to 950 feet on a dramatic southwest facing slope at the "crown" of the Santa Rita Hills, making it one of the highest planted vineyards in the AVA. Its elevation makes this site particularly exposed to coastal fog and cool marine winds from the nearby Pacific Ocean, ideal for the production of premium quality Chardonnay. The soils are sandy loam with ancient seashell deposits, which contributes to the hallmark minerality found in the wines. The block used for this Chardonnay is planted to Dijon clone 76 on 101-14 rootstock.

VINTAGE: Mother Nature set the stage for a challenging vintage in 2011 with a hard freeze in January and frost in April, causing damage to the buds and green tissue in certain vineyards. Spring and summer brought below average temperatures, which resulted in a long, cool growing season. This, combined with lower crop yields, fostered excellent development of depth and complexity in the fruit. Chardonnay from Rita's Crown Vineyard was harvested on September 29 just prior to the onset of a light rain event in early October.

WINEMAKING: Ken's "old world" approach to making Chardonnay involves adding richness and silkiness to complement the vibrant character of the fruit. 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 70% malo-lactic fermentation to protect the integrity of the fruit. The Chardonnay then aged *sur lie* for 11 months in French oak barrels, with 14% new French oak, and was bottled on September 2, 2012.

TASTING NOTES: This debut bottling of Rita's Crown Vineyard Chardonnay is silky and complex with very expressive aromas of white peach and lemon custard along with a characteristic thread of minerality. Beautifully balanced natural acidity together with subtle influences from French oak adds to the appeal of the wine. A rich, viscous texture carries through to an opulent, yet bright finish. This Chardonnay will continue to develop, becoming even more complex with additional bottle age.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 6.4 g/l

pH: 3.37

Alcohol: 14.3%

Production: 67 cases