



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 was replanted in 1999 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: Contrary to the erratic weather of the 2010 and 2011 vintages, 2012 featured very favorable, well timed weather patterns throughout the growing season. Winter rainfall was below average, but showers in March replenished the soil profile just as the vines were beginning the growth cycle. Consistently cool summer temperatures and several warm spells in September and October helped fully ripen the fruit. Crop size was characteristically small, which promoted concentration and complexity in the fruit. Grapes from Nielson Vineyard were harvested on September 15.

WINEMAKING: This small bottling of Chardonnay comes from a vineyard Ken has worked with for more than 30 years. The vines are especially expressive, and Ken's "old world" approach to winemaking adds richness and silkiness that 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 80% malo-lactic fermentation to protect the integrity of the fruit. The Chardonnay then aged *sur lie* for 10 months in French oak barrels, with 20% new French oak, and was bottled on August 13, 2013.

TASTING NOTES: This Chardonnay is elegant and beautifully expressive with vibrant aromas of Honeycrisp apple and pear accented by hints of honeysuckle, cinnamon and a touch of nuttiness. Flavors of apple, pear and white peach will gradually turn to honey, pear and hazelnut as the wine develops. A rich, silky texture carries through to an opulent, seamless finish that culminates in a sparkle of natural acidity and floral notes. As in past vintages of Nielson Chardonnay, this wine will enjoy exceptional ageability.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 6.3 g/l

pH: 3.35

Alcohol: 14.3%

Production: 231 cases