



**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 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 the classic white Burgundy clone 124.

**VINTAGE:** The 2014 harvest made history as the earliest and shortest in duration in Santa Barbara County to date, commencing on August 25 and concluding just 32 days later. The growing season began with a very mild winter and below average rainfall for the third year in a row. Budbreak occurred in early March followed by warm, even temperatures throughout the spring and summer. Yields were a touch above average in most vineyards, though slightly lower than 2013. Chardonnay from Rita's Crown Vineyard was harvested on August 28.

**WINEMAKING:** Ken's "old world" approach to making Chardonnay adds the right touch of richness and depth 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 100% malo-lactic fermentation. It aged *sur lie* for 11 months in French oak with 15% new French oak. The wine was bottled on August 18, 2015.

**TASTING NOTES:** This stunning Chardonnay offers expressive aromas of white nectarine and crisp Asian pear accented by hints of honey, seashell, cardamom and a touch of marzipan. The palette features enticing flavors of green apple, honeysuckle, peach nectar and a subtle aged cheddar component. The rich, viscous texture is harmoniously intertwined with a crisp acid profile. The silkiness and complexity of the wine carry 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.: 6.9 g/l

pH: 3.27

Alcohol: 14.1%

Production: 147 cases