



**VINEYARD SOURCE:** 100% *Rita's Crown Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills*. Planted in 2007, Rita's Crown has quickly become one of the star 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 2015 vintage is a record vintage in many ways. It was the earliest harvest on record, eclipsing the previous 2014 record by up to two weeks for most varietals. A relatively mild winter led to an early start of the ripening cycle. Once buds began to push, mild spring weather allowed them to develop at an accelerated pace uninterrupted by spring frosts. Yields were also record low, averaging 30-50% below historical averages. The 2015 vintage had near perfect ripening conditions and is already being declared the "vintage of the decade" by most winemakers. Chardonnay from Rita's Crown Vineyard was harvested on August 26.

**WINEMAKING:** Ken's "old world" approach to making Chardonnay adds just 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, including 17% new French oak. The wine was bottled on August 4, 2016.

**TASTING NOTES:** This stunning Chardonnay offers fresh, expressive aromas of apricot and honeysuckle accented by hints of seashell, Meyer lemon zest and a touch of triple cream brie. The palate features enticing flavors of crisp pear, lemon curd, brioche and a hint of nutmeg. The rich 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 more complexity with additional bottle age.

#### TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 6.7 g/l

pH: 3.34

Alcohol: 14.1%

Production: 144 cases