



2016 RITA'S CROWN VINEYARD CHARDONNAY

Appellation	Sta. Rita Hills
T.A.	6.4 g/l
pH	3.46
Alcohol	13.9%
Production	133 cases

VINEYARD

100% Rita's Crown Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills

Planted in 2007, Rita's Crown is located at an elevation of 600 to 950 feet on a dramatic southwest-facing slope, making it one of the highest vineyards in the AVA. The site is 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

Unseasonably warm weather in February was moderated by cold nighttime temperatures, suppressing budbreak until early March, a bit later than the 2014 and 2015 vintages. While the limited winter rainfall was disappointing, the timing was advantageous. Most precipitation fell January through March, allowing flowering and set to occur without the threat of damage. The rest of the harvest season saw cooler temperatures alternate with short warmer spells, which helped winemakers target optimum ripening of the fruit. Crop yields were average and berry size was small to medium. Grapes from Rita's Crown were harvested on August 30, 2016.

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 18% new French oak. The wine was bottled on August 28, 2017.

TASTING NOTES

This stunning Chardonnay offers expressive aromas of poached pears, apricot, green apple and crème brûlée accented by hints of cinnamon stick and orange zest. The palate features enticing flavors of persimmon, Meyer lemon, honeysuckle and a hint of seashell. 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, becoming even more complex with additional bottle age.