

# KEN BROWN



2018

Chardonnay  
Sta. Rita Hills

13.9% ALC BY VOL

## 2018 STA RITA HILLS CHARDONNAY

Appellation	Sta. Rita Hills
T.A.	5.5 g/l
pH	3.40
Alcohol	13.9%
Production	175 cases

## VINEYARDS

55% La Rinconada Vineyard, 33% Radian Vineyard, 12% Chapel Vineyard

La Rinconada Vineyard features Dijon Chardonnay clone 76 and was planted by Richard Sanford in 1997. Located in the heart of Sta. Rita Hills, the site enjoys coastal fog and well-drained soils that result in rich aromatics and flavors in the wine. Radian Vineyard is located in the southwest corner of the appellation and receives direct exposure to cold winds and marine fog from the Pacific Ocean. Chapel Vineyard (formerly Huber) was planted in 1987 to the Wente clone of Chardonnay. It is one of the oldest vineyards in the appellation and has been meticulously cared for during its long history.

## VINTAGE

The 2018 vintage was our latest harvest since 2012. Late rains in March were well-timed and budbreak occurred about two weeks later than recent averages. Temperatures throughout the spring and summer remained cool. Nighttime temperatures were consistently chilly as well, in the low to mid-50s, ideal for retaining the natural acidity in the grapes. Canopies were healthy and well positioned to go the distance to ripen the fruit. Berries were small, and yields were customarily low, resulting in excellent concentration and intensity in the fruit. Chardonnay from La Rinconada was harvested on October 2, from Radian on October 17 and from Chapel on October 24.

## WINEMAKING

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 10 months in French oak, including 22% new French oak. The wine was bottled on August 1, 2019.

## TASTING NOTES

This refreshing, yet richly layered Chardonnay offers vivid aromas of white peach and Asian pear with hints of orange zest, vanilla and flint. A medley of flavors, including apricot, mango, key lime and honey are enveloped in an elegant texture that leads to a pleasing toastiness on the finish. The wine's balance of richness and natural acidity ensures excellent development and even more complexity with additional bottle age.