



RIVERBENCH

2011 Harvest

The 2011 growing season was one of the most difficult on record with very cool temperatures throughout the summer and into the fall. We never truly got the heat spike we usually see in September, and temperatures remained mild throughout the fall and winter. Additionally, we experienced very dry conditions through the end of the year, with rainfalls much lower than usual. However, low yields at harvest truly summarized the season. Our grape tonnage was, on average, about 30 percent lower than typical years, and most of our neighbors saw similar conditions. As a result, many wineries were shorted on fruit because there was not much to sell. We began harvesting grapes for our sparkling wines on August 26 and our Pinot Noir on September 13, which in retrospect was fairly normal timing. We completed harvest on October 19; this was a greatly abbreviated harvest period for us. The light yields, especially in the Chardonnay and younger blocks of Pinot Noir, made harvesting move swiftly though the acreage. The wines themselves experienced a natural cold soak at 50 degrees and fermentation began on its own.

The wines never got above ninety degrees during fermentation, and barrel temperatures never exceeded the mid 70's.



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RIVERBENCH

2011 ESTATE CHARDONNAY

Estate Grown and Bottled

Santa Maria Valley



Composition

100% Chardonnay

Harvest

October 2011

Cooperage

11 months in French Oak, 20% new

Coopers

Boutes, Seguin Moreau, Roberts and Sons

Bottled

September 18, 2012

Acidity

.61 g/100mL

pH

3.6

Alcohol

14.2%

Production

50 cases

Suggested Retail Price

\$26

Winemakers Notes

Are you constantly let down by Chardonnay? Does the thought of ordering it off a menu scare you, for fear you'll end up with a glass of sad, watery something that tastes like it's been left out too long? There's nothing more depressing than an overoaked Chardonnay, and it's our humble opinion that too many winemakers cover up the gorgeous nuances of this lovely fruit. Before you write off the varietal for good, give this wine a chance. Our Estate Chardonnay, which has a true balance between rich fruit flavors and an appealing toasty note, really is that good. Enjoy it with a soft and runny cheese or some creamy crab dip.