



RIVERBENCH



## 2020 RESERVE CHARDONNAY

*Estate Grown & Bottled – Santa Maria Valley*

COMPOSITION	100% Chardonnay, Clone 4
HARVEST	September 14, 15, 2020
COOPERAGE	40% New French Oak
COOPERS	Francois Frères
ACIDITY	0.58 g/100ml
PH	3.51
ALCOHOL	12.8%
BOTTLED	July 2021
PRODUCTION	444 cases
PRICE	\$36

90

Wine Enthusiast  
December 2022

### WINEMAKERS NOTES

Here at Riverbench, we make it our duty to convert those tasters who “just don’t like Chardonnay” into fans of this noble grape! Here’s the thing: these naysayers are seeking balance of toastiness and acidity, and our Reserve provides just that. Aromas of roasted hazelnuts and a hint of charred peaches surprise the nose, then flavors of melting vanilla ice cream and a spritz of lemon zest wake up the palate. The complexities in the wine complement each other, making it a fun one to pair with food. Serving a fancy cheese or something with beurre blanc sauce? Look no further, friend. You’ve found the one.

### 2020 HARVEST

Amidst high tensions in the weather and the world at large, the 2020 vintage ushered in high quality and clean fruit reminiscent of Santa Maria’s celebrated cool climate. The year began with a dry winter that dribbled out less than half the usual rainfall and incited an early budburst. Hearty shoots managed to survive the windy spring and the nighttime frost alarms. Summer started out quiet and cool until August when high temperatures and humidity whipped up spectacular lightning shows and a few hefty downpours, testing our fungal-resistant pruning practices. When the turbulent storms subsided, they were replaced by 10 days of smoky haze as major fires broke out to the north and the south. By the grace of our valley topography, our vines were buffered by the worst of the smoke and flames with no taint detected on our early grape pulls. Harvest commenced with clean picks of sparkling Pinot Meunier on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Timing was steady and calculated. Safe from the challenges of weather, smoke, and global pandemics, the grapes in the winery unfolded elegantly. Our Pinot Noirs show incredible color with particularly luscious tannins from this year’s small berries while the Chardonnays will age well into the future with bright acids and popping citrus aromas. While challenging, 2020’s adversities built wines with character, concentration, and complexity that gave us cause to celebrate.