



RIVERBENCH



2021 ESTATE CHARDONNAY

Estate Grown & Bottled, Santa Maria Valley

COMPOSITION	100% Chardonnay, Clone 4
HARVEST	October 23, 2021
COOPERAGE	50% 1 year, 50% 2 year French Oak
COOPERS	Seguin Moreau
ACIDITY	T.A. 0.68 g/100mL
PH	3.33
ABV	13.8%
BOTTLED	October 28, 2022
PRODUCTION	386 cases
PRICE	\$30

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ANTONIO GALLONI
September 2023

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WINE ENTHUSIAST
February 2024

WINEMAKER'S 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 a flabby 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, show this wine some love. Our Estate Chardonnay, which has a true balance between fruit flavors and an appealing buttery note, really is that good. Enjoy it with gourmet mac and cheese (a hint of bacon would complement the oak nicely!) or grilled trout.

2021 HARVEST

The 2021 season started with a historically normal bud-break following only 6" of winter rain, 8" under our average. Only a few frost alarms in the Spring and no damage from frost. The cool spring weather and noticeably higher cluster counts led to an extended bloom and berry set period. Vine indicators like bloom, berry set, and veraison were tracking 2 weeks later than average, and as the fruit continued to ripen, the season extended to 4 weeks later than average years. The benefit of the temperate days and cool nights was slow and well-rounded berry uniformity and ripeness. As we began harvesting, we saw our yields were coming in 20-25% higher than expected and this was the reason for the extended time needed to ripen the fruit. In the winery, we usually kick off the vintage with our Pinot Meunier for sparkling, but this year we started with still wines — a full 6 weeks behind the historical average. Wente Chardonnay were the first of the grapes to come in on September 17th, One Palm Pinot Noir on September 30th, and Sparkling Pinot Meunier on September 23rd. Fermentations were slow and steady for Pinot Noirs with malolactic finishing in late winter due to the colder winter months. Chardonnay came in mid-October, was pressed, racked and went to barrel. Primary fermentation was cool and long, just like we prefer in a cool vintage. A few lots "went to sleep for the winter" as the French like to say. They began to wake up in spring and finished primary and secondary fermentation. Acids are bright and crisp with flavor profiles highlighting the dark fruits for Pinot Noirs and citrus fruits for Chardonnays.

