



RIVERBENCH



2021 RESERVE 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 François Frères

ACIDITY T.A. 0.71 g/100mL

PH 3.33

ABV 14.3%

BOTTLED December 19, 2022

PRODUCTION 274 cases

PRICE \$38

WINEMAKER'S 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.

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.

