



RIVERBENCH



2021 WENTE CLONE CHARDONNAY

Estate Grown & Bottled, Santa Maria Valley

COMPOSITION 100% Chardonnay, Wente Clone

HARVEST September 17, 2021

COOPERAGE 24% New French Oak

COOPERS Damy

ACIDITY T.A. 0.7 g/100mL

PH 3.2

ABV 14.3%

BOTTLED December 28, 2022

PRODUCTION 367 cases

PRICE \$45

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

The newest addition to the Riverbench collection of Chardonnay's, the Wente Clone is a California specialty. With a genetic lineage that can be traced back to some of California's most revered Chardonnay plantings, the inaugural vintage offers an attention-grabbing key lime pie character, with subtle floral aromas, lime, toasted cream, and graham cracker on the palate followed by nuanced streaks of ripe apricot through the finish. The acidity is assertive yet refreshing; expertly balanced with partial aging in new French oak and partial malolactic conversion. Enjoy it with a soft cheese or creamy lobster bisque.

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.