



2008 Chardonnay
Santa Barbara County

Appellation: Santa Maria Valley
Varietal: 100% Chardonnay

pH: 3.19
Alcohol by volume: 14.1 %
T.A.: .79 g / L
R.S.: 0.18 %
Malic Acid: 1.44 g / L

Produced and Bottled by:
Kenneth Volk Vineyards
5230 Tepusquet Road
Santa Maria, CA 93454
www.volkwines.com

Winemaker's Notes

Growing Season and Vineyards

2008 was a very cool and dry growing season in the Santa Maria Valley. The second year of a La Niña climate cycle brought the lowest rainfall in recorded history to the Santa Maria Valley. Fortunately, early drip irrigation could be used to make up for the deficit of rain. Bud break began in late February but cool conditions prevented significant vine growth until the beginning of April. Unlike most varieties, the bloom conditions for Chardonnay were favorable and allowed for a good crop to set. The balance of the growing season was cooler than normal with the diurnal ebb and flow of marine air and fog coming off the nearby Pacific Ocean. Our 2008 Santa Barbara County Chardonnay is a blend of fruit from our estate (16%) and the Sierra Madre Vineyard (84%), both of which are located in Santa Maria Valley. Our estate Chardonnay is planted to the Wente selection of Chardonnay which has extremely small clusters of tiny berries averaging eight clusters to the pound in 2008. The Sierra Madre Vineyard is located six miles west of the winery on the Santa Maria Mesa. The fruit from Sierra Madre Vineyard came from two different blocks: the 210 block, where we harvested Dijon Clone 95 and Block 232, where we harvested the Robert Young selection of Chardonnay.

In the Cellar

Each vineyard component was hand harvested, whole cluster pressed and cold settled prior to the start of fermentation. Our estate fruit fraction used for this bottling was barrel-fermented in relatively neutral (four year old) Hungarian oak cooperage and was fermented with high ester-producing yeast strains of BA-11 and T-306 to try to play up the candied fruit character of the Wente fruit. The Sierra Madre Clone 95 lot was barrel-fermented in new and one-year-old François Frères and TW Boswell French oak cooperage with yeast strains D-254, Montrachet and AEB CH to emphasize the structure and mid-palate volume that Clone 95 brings to the party. The Robert Young fruit was barrel-fermented in a mixture of Burgundy and Hungarian cooperage; predominately two and three-year-old cooperage with a gauntlet of cultured yeast strains. Primary fermentation lasted over several months in our refrigerated barrel room and the barrels were topped in place as fermentation was completed. Barrels were rolled twice weekly on our OXO roller-wheel barrel rack system to keep a constant turbidity in the young wine to better integrate the fruit, creating more texture and mouth feel. The wine remained on its gross lees for seven months and the wine was allowed to fall clear prior to nitrogen gas counter-pressure racking to tank in preparation for bottling.

In the Glass

This delicious wine has aromas of pear, sliced apple, nutmeg, vanilla and toasted cereal. On the palate this Chardonnay is rich without being too heavy with flavors of pear and caramelized tropical fruits. Bright acidity makes this wine a fine companion to rich pastas, seared seafood and roasted chicken.