



2011 Albariño, River Bench Vineyard

Appellation: Santa Maria Valley

pH: 3.61

T.A.: 0.610

Malic Acid: 304 MG/100mls

Bottling Date: January 26, 2012

Cases Produced: 178

Suggested Retail \$24

Produced and Bottled by:

Kenneth Volk Vineyards

5230 Tepusquet Road

Santa Maria, CA 93454

805.938.7896

www.volkwines.com

In The Vineyard

Kenneth Volk Vineyards is proud to present the first bottling of the Spanish grape varietal, Albariño, to be grown, produced and bottled in the Santa Maria Valley. Albariño is known as Alvarinho in Portugal. Albariño is a small berried, thick skinned grape variety that is borne on small to medium sized clusters. Similar to its relative Verdelho, Albariño's thick skins help to make it less rot prone and capable of withstanding the wet, windy, cool maritime conditions where it is grown. Albariño is an aromatic variety capable of producing wines with perfumed aromas due to its terpene rich, thick skins that create some of the same aromas found in Muscat, Gewürztraminer and Viognier. The aroma of Albariño is more of sweet, ripe fruit versus floral and it tends to smell and taste like ripe peach and citrus fruit. In its homeland, it tends to produce wines with bracing acidity and is typically picked ripe to balance its inherent tartness. Albariño/Alvarinho grapes have been cultivated for over 600 years in the cool, wet maritime climate of north western Spain (Galicia) and Portugal (Vino Verde). These two regions are separated by the Minho River, which is the border between Spain to the north, and Portugal to the south. While the Greeks, Phoenicians and Romans fostered viticulture in this area, it was the Christian church that helped preserve wine growing in the region. It was the wine loving Christians who fought the Moors from the narrow strip of the Iberian Peninsula that would later become the country of Portugal. It is reputed that Albariño was brought to Iberia by Benedictine monks of the Cluny Abbey of Saone-Et Loire France. The name Alba-rino translates to *the white (wine) from the Rhine*. Strangely, there is little genetic evidence linking Albariño /Alvarinho to grapes grown along the Rhine River.

The Riverbench Vineyard is a neighboring vineyard and winery, across the Sisquoc River from Kenneth Volk Vineyards in the Santa Maria Valley. Planted under a long term contract for Kenneth Volk Vineyards in 2007 this block is attentively farmed by viticulturist Jim Stollenberg. The Albarino block was established on a ten foot row by five foot vine spacing and the vines are cordon trained, spur pruned and the canopy is vertically trained. 2011 was the first harvest for this small block of Albariño and 1.7 tons were harvested. 2011 was a tough, windy, cool growing season and the early rains made the Santa Maria Valley a little too reminiscent of the Galicia region of Spain. Despite the cool conditions and early rains, the well-drained soils of the Riverbench Vineyard allowed our Albariño to ripen and mature.

In the Cellar

The fruit was hand harvest and hand sorted in the field prior to delivery to the winery in half-ton macro bins. The fruit was whole cluster pressed in our bladder press with a modified champagne cycle with minimal press rotations at low pressures to minimize phenolic extraction and solids in the press juice. The juice was cold settled for 72 hours prior to racking clear juice off the settled solids. This wine was fermented in stainless steel at 50 degrees with a combination of yeast strains VL1 and Hst. These yeast strains ferment well at low temperatures and enhance aroma extraction. The wine was aged on its fermentation lees until preparation for bottling.

In the Glass

Our 2011 River Bench Albarino has intense fruity aromas of white peach, honey, mandarin and ripe Medjool dates. On the palate it shows ripe yellow peach, guava, citrus fruits and honey. The wines' viscosity is somewhat reminiscent of Viognier; however this wine finishes with bright acidity. This delicious wine can be paired with all forms of seafood, shellfish, vegetable risotto or mildly spicy cuisine.