



2011 Chardonnay, Jaybird

Appellation: Santa Maria Valley

pH: 3.26

T.A.: .79

Malic Acid: 235mg

Bottling Date: January 16, 2012

Cases Produced: 1553

Suggested Retail \$24

Produced and Bottled by:

Kenneth Volk Vineyards

5230 Tepusquet Road

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In The Vineyard

“Jaybird” is Kenneth Volk Vineyard’s proprietary name for our un-oaked Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay. The Santa Maria Valley is one of the rare transverse valleys of California where its east-west orientation allows maritime air to penetrate inland due to the lack of any obstruction between the cold waters of the Pacific Ocean, off of northern Santa Barbara County, and the vineyards of the Santa Maria Valley. This marine influenced climate moderates the daily temperatures creating one of the coolest and longest grape growing regions in California. Our 2011 bottling is from fruit grown on the Sierra Madre Vineyard Block 232 in the Santa Maria Valley appellation of Santa Barbara County. This hillside block consists of 6.5 acres of Robert Young selection and 1.5 acres of UC Davis clone #4 Chardonnay. The sandy gravel, loam soil of this section of the Sierra Madre Vineyard provides an excellent well drained rooting matrix for grape growing. The vines are planted on 10 foot rows with five feet between vines. Trained to bilateral cordons, the vines are spur pruned and shoot growth is vertically positioned with multiple lift wires. 2011 was a year with above average rainfall in the Santa Maria Valley; but what made it unusual was the large amount of rain that came after February. The late rains kept the vines in a protracted vegetative state which delayed flowering, fruit set and eventual harvest.

In the Cellar

The fruit was hand harvested and field sorted into half ton macro bins in the early morning and promptly delivered to the winery. The grapes were pressed as whole clusters in our bladder press with free run and press juice up to 1.6 bars kept as one lot and higher pressure juice was kept as a separate hard press lot. The fruit was split harvested at different levels of maturity for a diversity of flavors and aromas. The juice was cold settled for 72 hours at 38 degrees prior to racking off its juice lees to start fermentation in another tank. The cooling jackets were set at 50 degrees and it took several days for fermentation to slowly begin. Our “Jaybird” Chardonnay was fermented with indigenous yeasts from the vineyard as well as inoculations of cultured yeast strains. The yeast strain *Torulaspora Delbrueckii* that is most often used in the production of fine wheat beer was used to start fermentation. This yeast strain tends to produce floral and fruity aromas and has low alcohol conversion efficiency. After the first 5 degrees of juice had been fermented the tank was inoculated with *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* yeast strain VL1. VL1 is a slow but steady fermenting strain that helps to release bound aromas and enhances fruit aromas to its resulting wines. Fermentation continued very slowly over the course of 5 weeks and when 2 degrees of sugar remained the cool jackets were turned off to promote complete fermentation. The high acidity of the 2011 vintage led us to promote partial malolactic fermentation to soften and lengthen the finish of this wine. This Chardonnay remained on its fermentation lees which were periodically stirred to keep the yeast cells in suspension until preparation for bottling.

In The Glass

Our 2011 Jaybird Chardonnay has aromas of ripe Granny Smith apple and citrus zest. On the palate, flavors of pear apple, and papaya lead to a flinty finish held up by bright acidity.