



GARY FARRELL

VINEYARDS & WINERY

2019 LA RINCONADA VINEYARD CHARDONNAY STA. RITA HILLS

Vineyards

In 1971 Richard Sanford and Michael Benedict took a chance on a spring fed farm on the north facing slopes of the east west traversing Santa Ynez River on California's Central Coast and planted what became Sanford & Benedict Vineyards to Pinot Noir. Planted in 1997, the La Rinconada Vineyard sits adjacent to Sanford & Benedict, and contains 12 clones within 20 vineyard blocks. La Rinconada is primarily planted to Pinot Noir, but is complemented by some very special Chardonnay vines. The success of these sites depends on the maritime influences of the Pacific Ocean. The movement of fog and cooling winds up valley and the soil, a living medium of minerals and organic material, is quite unique to this growing region. A byproduct of receding seas, river-deposited particles, landslides and the slow weathering of ancient stone, which in the Sta. Rita Hills AVA includes shale, serpentine, and sandstone. The lower portion of La Rinconada sits on sandy loam, but transitions to clay loam, diatomaceous earth and shale on the hills closer to Sanford & Benedict.

Vintage

After record-breaking rainfall in late February, a relatively cool spring followed, delaying bud break into mid to late March. The delayed onset and cool temperatures would predict the beginning of harvest at a more typical date, compared to a few past vintages. The month of May brought more heavy rains. Thankfully, the cold temperatures and delayed start of bud break meant that bloom was later as well, and only a few vineyards had started to produce flowers, so damage to the crop was minimal. Summer temperatures were perfect and mild. By June, growers began to see that a big crop was forming. Come July, veraison was under way and growers had to drop lots of unevenly ripening clusters on several occasions. Despite the quantity of clusters per vine, flavor, concentration and tannin levels were quite excellent. Canopy management was extremely important in that fruit thinning was necessary at multiple stages of vine development.

Winemaking

The grapes were harvested at 22.3° Brix, in the cool morning hours to preserve freshness and fruit integrity, then whole cluster pressed using a modified Champagne program to gently press the grapes yielding beautiful, fluffy lees. After pressing, the juice was chilled to 45°F in tank, and allowed to settle for 24 hours before inoculating with Montrachet yeast. The wine was then transferred to 35% new, light toast French oak barrels and Puncheons (François Frères & DAMY), with just the right amount of light, fluffy, creamy lees for a healthy fermentation. After 9 months of aging, each barrel was carefully evaluated and the most elegantly structured wines were selected for this beautiful single vineyard wine.

Tasting Notes

Generous layers of dried flowers, beeswax, and lemon balm introduce this Chardonnay from La Rinconada. Aromas of pear tart with hints of apple blossoms unwind slowly from the glass. Mineral laden in essence, plenty of citrus fruits and bright green apple interact with a subtle salinity that persists from beginning to end.

Appellation

Sta. Rita Hills

Vineyards

La Rinconada Vineyard

Composition

100% Chardonnay

Fermentation & Aging

9 months in 35% new
French oak

Alcohol

13.7%

pH / T.A.

3.27 / 6.2 gm/L

Production

513 Cases

Bottling Date

June 10, 2020