

DRAGONETTE



2018 CHARDONNAY, RITA'S CROWN VINEYARD



100% CHARDONNAY

CLONE

76 & 95

APPELLATION

Sta. Rita Hills

YIELD (TONS PER ACRE)

1.25 to 1.62 TPA (Ave. 1.47)

HARVEST DATE

September 5 & 20

FERMENTATION

100% Barrel Fermented

Native yeasts

Native MLF (in barrel)

COOPERAGE

100% French Oak (228L & 350L barrels)

30% New

AGING

18 Months on the lees (no *battonage*)

BOTTLED

March 16, 2020

ALCOHOL: 14.3%

CASES PRODUCED: 220

SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$65

PHILOSOPHY

We strive to create Chardonnays of textural purity, complexity and balance with classic tension. Complexity and balance are achieved by meticulous attention to detail in the vineyard, where each vineyard block is managed for appropriate canopy and proper yields. Tension and textural purity begin in the vineyard with low yields and balanced acidity at harvest. Native yeast fermentation in clean oak cooperage and aging on the lees aid in preserving the purity of texture. We age our wines on their lees, without stirring or racking, with constant topping. Moreover, each wine is bottled only after sufficient time in barrel to permit ideal evolution.

We bottle single vineyard wines when wines from a particular vineyard express a unique character or sense of “place” and yet are complete wines of balance, harmony and interest.

THE VINEYARD

Rita's Crown vineyard is located at one of the highest points in the Sta. Rita Hills, adjacent to such famous sites as Mt Carmel and Sea Smoke. The soils are a mix of sandy and clay loams with diatomaceous earth. We obtain Chardonnay from two steeply pitched blocks with west and southwest facing slopes which are regularly buffeted by high winds and engulfed in fog. The low vigor soils produce a small canopy, small yields and a long slow growing season. The wines here tend to show some beautiful tropical fruits, but are typically balanced and energetic, with strong notes of chalky minerals and ample acidity providing lift and cut.

THE VINTAGE

2018 saw a return to the weather of the cooler years such as 2010/2011. Winter rains and a cool early spring helped delay budbreak, while providing for a good soil water profile. Weather was good during set, allowing for reasonable, though not excessive, yields. A warm early summer promoted ripeness, but in late August the weather turned quite cool, with only moderate daytime highs, lots of clouds and cold nights. The grapes, generally, moved very slowly toward full ripeness, which occurred in September. Grapes had excellent flavors at lower sugars and with plenty of energetic acid and good freshness.

OUR WINEMAKING

We picked individual blocks in separate passes with field sorting. Within hours, the grapes were gently pressed, the juice settled, then put down to barrels for primary fermentation, which took place with native yeasts. The wine saw complete (native) malolactic fermentation in barrel and was aged on the lees in French oak barrels (30% new) for 18 months, before gentle cross flow filtration and bottling.

PROPRIETORS/WINEMAKERS

John Dragonette, Steve Dragonette, & Brandon Sparks-Gillis