

DRAGONETTE



2020 CHARDONNAY, RITA'S CROWN VINEYARD



100% CHARDONNAY

CLONES

76 & 95

APPELLATION

Sta. Rita Hills

YIELD (TONS PER ACRE)

2.25 to 3.35 TPA (Ave. 3.13)

HARVEST DATES

September 14 & October 6

FERMENTATION

100% Barrel Fermented

Native yeasts

Native MLF (in barrel)

COOPERAGE

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

44% New

AGING

16 Months on the lees (no *battonage*)

BOTTLED

March 3, 2022

ALCOHOL: 13.7%

CASES PRODUCED: 235

SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$65

PHILOSOPHY

We seek to identify exceptional vineyard sites and farming partners to source and grow the finest fruit in Santa Barbara. Vineyard blocks are individually managed for appropriate canopy, proper yield, and ideal pick date. We then shepherd this fruit into wine with our own hands. The goal is wines of complexity, balance, and textural purity that are also true to both vintage and place. For Chardonnay, we believe the cool climate of Santa Barbara is perfect for crafting wines with dramatic aromas and flavors balanced with minerality and tension from great natural acidity.

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 is located at one of the highest points in the Sta. Rita Hills, adjacent to such famous sites as Mt Carmel and Sea Smoke. Farming is organic with some biodynamics (not certified). Soils are sandy and clay loam with diatomaceous earth. Chardonnay comes from two steep west and southwest facing blocks which are regularly buffeted by high winds. The low vigor soils produce a small canopy, small yields, and a long slow growing season. The wines here tend to show beautiful tropical fruits, balanced by strong notes of chalky minerals and great natural acidity.

THE VINTAGE

2020 was an extraordinary year in Santa Barbara. We fortunately avoided the disastrous firestorms that devastated many of the other major wine growing areas in California. We also largely avoided the effects of extreme heat waves, due to careful canopy management, constant monitoring of the vineyards, dropping of damaged fruit, and picking on precise dates with vigorous field sorting.

Winter was cold, delaying budbreak. A cool, wet Spring tamed vigor and extended flowering. Yields were initially average to above average. Summer (July to mid-August) began the classic pattern of cool, foggy mornings, warm days, then cool, windy evenings. Mid-August saw the first of four punishing heat events. Fortunately, each heat wave was interspersed with cool periods which allowed the vines to reset. We picked the Chardonnay in between the heat waves, in mid-September and early October under cool conditions.

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 (44% new) for 16 months before bottling.

PROPRIETORS/WINEMAKERS

John Dragonette, Steve Dragonette, & Brandon Sparks-Gillis

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