

DRAGONETTE



2016 CHARDONNAY, RITA'S CROWN VINEYARD



100% CHARDONNAY

CLONES

76

APPELLATION

Sta. Rita Hills

YIELD (TONS PER ACRE)

Approx. 2.60 TPA

HARVEST DATES

August 24 - 30

FERMENTATION

100% Barrel Fermented

Native yeasts

COOPERAGE

100% French Oak

20% New

AGING

17 Months on the lees

BOTTLED

March 8, 2018

ALCOHOL: 14.4%

CASES PRODUCED: 290

SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$60

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 racking, and 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 a good amount of diatomaceous earth. We obtain Chardonnay from Block 16, a steep, west-southwest facing block above the monastery, which is 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 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

2016 was another in a string of terrific vintages in Santa Barbara. We had another early budbreak, and (unlike 2015) perfect weather during set, allowing for a strong, balanced crop. May, June and July were quite warm and ripening was fairly quick; however, an unseasonably cool August slowed the vines considerably. For the winemaker it was almost ideal, as the grapes were able to complete ripening slowly, without heat spikes, and the grapes maintained excellent acidity. Over a series of cool mornings, we picked each block at near-perfect ripeness and balance. The wines have great fruit character, excellent depth, with refreshing natural acidity.

OUR WINEMAKING

We picked the individual blocks in separate passes, and fermented them separately. At least one of us was present at every pick to hand-sort the clusters in the field. Within hours, we gently pressed the grapes and transferred the juice directly to barrels for primary fermentation, which took place with native yeasts and temperature control. The wine saw partial malolactic fermentation and was aged on the lees in French oak barrels (20% new) until just prior to blending a gentle, cross flow filtration and bottling.

PROPRIETORS/WINEMAKERS

John Dragonette, Steve Dragonette, & Brandon Sparks-Gillis