



## ***2011 Chardonnay Sonoma Coast***

**ORIGIN:** The grapes for this Chardonnay came from several excellent vineyards in southern Sonoma, where the Sonoma Coast meets Carneros, including the Sangiacomo, Champlin Creek and Hi Vista vineyards. Making their debut this season were some prime Russian River properties as well, including Saralee's and the famous Dutton Ranch. The Wildcat Mountain Vineyard, high up in the hills, foggy, windy, and truly coastal in its cool temperament, played a significant role as well.

**VINEYARD NOTES:** The 2010 growing season was the coolest in memory, and then 2011 came along to show us what "cool" really means, with an even lower total heat accumulation and an even later harvest! Longer "hang time" makes for good flavor development, though, and the lower sugars at harvest made for ideally balanced juice. Yields were moderate, averaging 3-5 tons/acre. All of the grapes destined for the Sonoma Coast Chardonnay blend were harvested by hand between September 27 and October 20.

**WINEMAKING NOTES:** All grapes went direct to press as whole clusters in order to maximize quality, and were gently pressed. After settling, most of the juice was racked into French oak barrels for fermentation, 20% of which were new. A significant portion were not inoculated, but allowed to ferment with indigenous yeasts.

Once dry and finished with ML, the barrel-fermented lots were aged on the lees for six months, with occasional stirring to increase richness and body. A select few lots were fermented in stainless, and never went to barrel, which emphasizes fruit and aromatics. The final blend was assembled prior to bottling, which ran from June 11 through 20, and was bottled for the second time using screw cap closures, to ensure a high-quality wine.

**TASTING NOTES:** The wine is pale straw gold in color, with bright lavender, wet stone and citrus aromas, with a touch of creamy custard. In the mouth it is elegant and full, with crisp apple and ripe pear flavors, plus a touch of vanilla caramel from the oak. The finish is soft and smooth, very dry, but leaves lingering lush primary fruit flavors.

This vintage produced 18,350 (750 ml) cases.