

Au Bon Climat



2020

Chardonnay Sanford & Benedict Vineyard

The first “great” vineyard in Santa Barbara County was planted by Richard Sanford and Michael Benedict in 1971 in the cool Sta. Rita Hills AVA. The Burgundian varieties had found a home in Santa Barbara County. Jim Clendenen noticed the “magic” of Sanford & Benedict early on. He purchased a few tons of grapes in the mid 1980s, and since then, Au Bon Climat has received grapes from this vineyard every year; a relationship of over 4 decades. Only Sanford Winery has that kind of “history” with this vineyard. The iconic, sustainably farmed vineyard was instrumental in elevating awareness that Santa Barbara County creates world-class Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Consequently, Sanford & Benedict Vineyard earned a position in Au Bon Climat’s Santa Barbara Historic Vineyards Collection series.

AT A GLANCE

APPELLATION:
Sta. Rita Hills

HARVEST: September 30, 2020

VINEYARD:
Sanford & Benedict Vineyard

ALCOHOL: 13.5%

VARIETAL:
Chardonnay

ACIDITY: 5.9 g/L

COOPERAGE:
18 months in 75% new François Frères French oak barrels

pH: 3.33

RESIDUAL SUGAR: <0

SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$40

Tasting Notes

Exceptional. Spiced orchard fruits, citrus, brioche, and toasty oak as well as hints of nuttiness all emerge. The palate grips with crushed rock minerality giving frame to the stone fruit and citrus flavors. Medium-bodied and well structured, it has bright acidity and a clean, vibrant, pure style that’s going to gain richness and depth with a year or two of bottle age and keep for a decade.

Food Pairings

As a young Chardonnay, this wine pairs well with any fish, salmon to trout. With age the wine matches will increase to richer dishes such as stuffed game birds or Chantrelle risotto.

From The Winemaker

Sanford & Benedict Vineyard is deservedly considered one of the great vineyards in America. A mantle of hard, siliceous chert-gravel covering deep, well-drained soils, combined with the cool climate (Region 1), is the ideal medium for quality Pinot and Chardonnay. After a nice long growing season, the grape’s chemistry numbers at the time of harvest were essentially perfect. The hallmark of the Au Bon Climat Chardonnays is age-ability, something that can only be done when all criteria is in balance. The Chardonnay was hand harvested, whole cluster pressed and put into barrel. We fermented in 75% new François Frères French oak barrels, as we do with our “reserve quality” wines. The wine completed alcoholic and malo-lactic fermentation in the barrel, and remained surlies until the following August. After racking and a light fining, we put the wine back to barrel for another 5 months. Barrel age was a total of 18 months.