

# Au Bon Climat

2021

## 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:** October 7, 2021

**VINEYARD:**  
Sanford & Benedict Vineyard

**ALCOHOL:** 13.5%

**ACIDITY:** 5.8 g/L

**VARIETAL:**  
Chardonnay

**pH:** 3.62

**RESIDUAL SUGAR:** <0

**COOPERAGE:**  
20 months, 75% new François Frères French oak barrels

**SUGGESTED RETAIL:** \$40

## Tasting Notes

Aromatics of lemon zest and green apple lift and balance the nose. On the palate is citrus, brioche, nuances of royal jelly and cinnamon, and oak notes of walnut and maplewood. The crushed rock minerality the vineyard is known for is throughout the wine. 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

Well matched with oysters on the half shell, salmon in beurre blanc, chicken breast with a creamy tarragon sauce, or a Gruyère cheese, ham and onion tart.

## From The Winemaker

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 sur lie until the following August. After racking and a light fining, the wine was put back to barrel. Barrel age was a total of 20 months.

Au Bon Climat & Clendenen Family Vineyards

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