

**VARIETY:**

Chardonnay

VINEYARD:

Escolle Road

APPELLATION:

Santa Lucia Highlands

HARVEST DATE:

Sep 30, 2020

ALCOHOL: 14.1%**PH:** 3.66**TA:** 4.0 g/L**AGING:**

100% French oak

81% new, 18 months

BOTTLING DATE: May 11, 2022**CASES PRODUCED:** 106

2020 RESERVE CHARDONNAY SLH

TASTING NOTES

A top-notch Chardonnay can be one of life's great pleasures and the Monterey appellation's climate, with morning fogs that often linger until midday, allows the intricate fruit flavors to develop while preserving crucial acidity. Our Chardonnay Reserve program was developed to produce a rich wine that showcases the distinctiveness of the Monterey growing region. This hand-harvested, small batch Chardonnay hails from the Santa Lucia Highlands, where the cool climate results in complex, intense wines.

If you like a richer style of Chardonnay, this one's for you. 100% barrel fermentation in small French oak barrels and malolactic fermentation add depth and roundness to the blend, creating a well-balanced expression of fruit and oak. Aromas of yellow apple, citrus, and pear are complemented by subtle hints of vanilla and caramel. The medium-bodied palate is structured with vibrant acidity and smooth oak integration, leading to a long, complex finish.

VINEYARD

Marine-influenced mornings and afternoon breezes coming off Monterey Bay create the unique thumbprint shared by Santa Lucia Highlands wines. The Escolle Road Vineyard is located on a northern elevated bench of the SLH appellation. Ancient, glacial alluvial soils pair with the morning fog and afternoon winds to create a true Region I climate, perfect for Burgundian grapes. The loose, nutrient-depleted foundation naturally stresses the vines, which results in wonderfully complex fruit flavors with bright acidity.

VINTAGE

The 2020 growing season unfolded with a gentle winter followed by spring rains and moderate temperatures. Lovely 85°F days and cool 55°F evenings allowed for even ripening of the grapes. Warmer late-season temperatures had our grapes ready to pick slightly earlier than normal, with our first grapes being harvested in mid-August. This proved to be a blessing because in late August, electrical storms sparked numerous fires that burned throughout Monterey County. Fortunately, fruit from our vineyards closest to the fires had already been picked and the strong winds off Monterey Bay helped to disperse the smoke and keep it from settling over our vineyards. In a year marked by challenge and change, we believe our 2020 vintage wines are a bright spot.

WINEMAKING

The grapes were hand-sorted and picked into half-ton bins. Upon delivery to the winery, the grapes were gently whole-cluster pressed to prevent oxidation and avoid extracting any harsh tannins. The juice was then racked clean into barrels for fermentation. A barrel fermentation warms up to a higher temperature than a stainless steel fermentation. This allows a greater extraction of oak tannins from the barrel, adding roundness and a fuller mouthfeel to the wine. The wine was aged in French oak barrels for 18 months.

WINERY & TASTING ROOM

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