



2005 DIERBERG VINEYARD CHARDONNAY SANTA MARIA VALLEY

Hard work, a vast time investment and near religious faith in our Chardonnay program has paid off. Through skilled viticulture and sensitive winemaking Dierberg Vineyard has produced what we feel is our very strongest Chardonnay to date.

THE VINEYARD

Dierberg Vineyard is situated atop a sandy loam mesa above the South Bank of the Santa Maria River. The ranch features a series of gently rolling hills and soils that are uncharacteristic of the growing area. Small knolls of sand at the eastern end of Block One contribute freshness and raciness to the wines; while hidden lenses of loamy clay scattered towards the western edge seem to produce wines with more power and structure. We like to think of our vineyard as a little corner of Burgundy in Santa Maria.

Wines from the Dierberg Vineyard—both our own and those from producers who purchase our fruit—take a long time to evolve and unwind, making them rewarding candidates for a sojourn in the wine cellar.

THE VINTAGE

2005 was a breakthrough vintage for the Central Coast—and Santa Barbara County in particular. Record setting winter rains—over 35 inches at the Dierberg Vineyard as opposed to our more typical 13 inches—flushed out the salt accumulated in the soil and cleansed any residual metals and nitrogen built up from the previous drought years. Needless to say, we started the growing season at what we call “field capacity,” meaning that the soil profile was fully saturated with as much water as it would hold. Mild spring conditions favored an even bud break and warm, dry weather in the early summer—without our typical blustery winds—allowed for an amazing set. Our Chardonnay naturally set an admirable 3.5 tons per acre and, in two passes, we thinned the crop to just below 3 tons per acre, which seemed to be ideal to balance healthy vine growth. There were no remark-

able hot or cold spells and harvest proceeded in a smooth, orderly fashion yielding good ripe flavors and remarkable acidity.

WINEMAKING

The winemaking techniques employed for our Chardonnays closely resemble those used for centuries in Burgundy. Cold fruit is “whole cluster” pressed and the resulting juice is settled briefly at cellar temperature. We like to keep as many solids as possible in contact with the juice, causing us to only remove only the very heaviest of the lees—essentially what dust from the vineyard comes into the winery on the grapes.

The juice is transferred to barrel unsulfured and uninoculated and allowed to begin fermentation on its own yeast. Occasionally, commercial yeast is added to certain lots two thirds of the way through fermentation as an insurance policy against stuck fermentations (when the yeast is unable to convert all the sugar in the wine to alcohol). For those lots that are allowed to finish fermentation naturally, a small amount of yeast nutrient is added at one third of the way through fermentation. The wine goes through malolactic fermentation on its own, usually dragging well into the Spring, and is stirred bi-weekly.

During the winter, after 16 months in barrel, the finished wine is racked from its lees, lightly fined with bentonite, isinglass and whole milk and is bottled unfiltered.

THE WINE

Chardonnays from the Dierberg Vineyard are characterized by their strong impression of acidity and by a finish that lingers for nearly a minute on the palate. Deep mango, grapefruit and lemon grass aromas balanced with fresh lemon peel notes and a creamy hazelnut impression. On the palate the wine is all citrus: lemon rind, lemon curd and lemon blossoms. With strong acidity and a tightly wound structure, the '05 Dierberg Vineyard Chardonnay drinks deliciously now with strongly flavored fish and even veal or simply prepared pork. With a few years in the cellar, expect the '05 Chardonnay to unwind into a rich, hedonistic and rewarding wine.

Composition: 100% Chardonnay

Appellation: Santa Maria Valley

Alcohol: 14.1 %

pH: 3.21

Total Acid: 9.5 g/L

Production: 2112 cases

DIERBERG

P.O. Box 1882, Santa Ynez, CA 93460

Phone (805) 693-0744 * Fax (805) 688-1985

www.dierbergvineyard.com