



Au Bon Climat

A historic Chardonnay from Sta. Rita Hills, showcasing purity, elegance, and Burgundian finesse with remarkable aging potential.



Chardonnay Sanford & Benedict Vineyard 2020

California, USA

Region and Vineyards

Sanford & Benedict Vineyard, located in the **Sta. Rita Hills AVA**, was planted in 1971 by Richard Sanford and Michael Benedict. It remains one of the most respected sites for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in California, helping to establish Santa Barbara County as a world-class wine region.

The vineyard's soils consist of siliceous chert-gravel over well-draining subsoils, allowing for excellent vine health and fruit concentration. The **cool, maritime-influenced climate** extends the growing season, leading to wines with balanced acidity, refined aromatics, and a structured mineral core. These conditions contribute to the wine's complexity and aging potential.

Winemaking

The Chardonnay was **hand-harvested and whole-cluster pressed**, ensuring minimal handling and preserving freshness. Fermentation occurred in **75% new François Frères French oak barrels**, a hallmark of Au Bon Climat's top-tier wines.

Both alcoholic and malolactic fermentation took place in barrel, followed by 11 months of lees aging before racking and a light fining. The wine was then **returned to barrel for an additional 5 months**, resulting in a total aging period of 18 months. This approach enhances depth and complexity while maintaining precision and elegance.

Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Pale gold with bright clarity.
- **Aroma:** Spiced orchard fruits, citrus zest, brioche, toasted oak, and hints of nuttiness.
- **Palate:** Medium-bodied, with a structured, mineral-driven core. Crushed rock minerality frames layers of stone fruit and citrus, balanced by fresh acidity. The wine gains richness and depth with age.

Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 100% Chardonnay



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Did You Know?

Sanford & Benedict Vineyard was instrumental in establishing Santa Barbara County as a premium wine region. Au Bon Climat has sourced fruit from this site for over four decades, maintaining one of the longest-running vineyard partnerships in the region.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Grilled salmon or trout** – The wine's acidity and minerality complement the rich flavors of the fish.
- **Chanterelle risotto** – The creamy texture of the risotto pairs beautifully with the wine's bright acidity and oak influence.
- **Stuffed game birds** – With bottle age, the Chardonnay's depth enhances the flavors of richer poultry dishes.
- **Seared scallops with lemon butter** – The citrus and brioche notes match the dish's buttery richness.



Wines & Spirits (W&S) : 94 Points (2019)

This wine comes from a parcel of chardonnay under contract to Au Bon Climat for more than 40 years. It has an old-vine reserve, starting off dense and broad, laden with expensive oak (half of the barrels are new). A leesy, toasted-nut savor comes up with air, the wine's flavors quietly unfurling; after a day the texture becomes generous, layered and full of energy, the oak in retrograde.



Robert Parker (RP) : 93 Points (2019)

The 2019 Chardonnay 34th Vintage Celebration, from the Sanford & Benedict Vineyard, is scented of apples and white peaches with touches of matchstick and crème brûlée. The light-bodied palate has a silky texture, seamless freshness and youthfully coiled fruit, focused more on flinty tones at this stage. It will benefit from several years in bottle.



Vinous (Antonio Galloni) (VN) : 93 Points (2019)

The 2019 Chardonnay Sanford & Benedict Vineyard Santa Barbara Historic Vineyards Collection is a soft, open knit wine that captures the personality of this site so well. Lemon confit, tangerine oil, marzipan and lightly honeyed notes all run through the 2018. Soft, silky contours round out the finish. (AG)



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