

Au Bon Climat

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

Chardonnay Sanford & Benedict Vineyard 2022

California, USA



Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 100% Chardonnay

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.

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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.



Robert Parker (RP) : 93 Points (2022)

While decidedly a more hands-on style than many contemporaries, the 2022 Chardonnay Sanford & Benedict Vineyard offers an alternate but timeless viewpoint on this historic site through a sumptuous, harmonious and ultimately pleasing style. Rich, spice-driven aromas of cinnamon, macadamia nuts and white chocolate foreshadow a rich, plush, decent palate that finishes with a delicious punch and incredible length, concluding with salted caramel and butterscotch notes.



Wine Enthusiast (WE) : 95 Points (2021)

Clean and mineral-driven aromas of chalk, crushed rock and bright citrus make for an excellent nose on this classic bottling from a classic vineyard. The palate offers honeydew and honeysuckle flavors, but it's the chalky texture that's most compelling, carrying through into an almond and coconut finish. (MK)