



## 2011 "Merrillie" Chardonnay LANDUCCI BLOCK • LIVERMORE VALLEY

THE STEVEN KENT WINERY

2011 marks the fourth vintage of fruit from the Landucci Block of Chardonnay, planted here in the Livermore Valley. This block, bearing my grandmother's maiden name, is planted to one of the older Wente clones. The first varietally-labeled Chardonnay was made from Wente clone fruit, and many of the most sought after clones in California (Robert Young, Hyde Selection) are children of Wente clone material.

The 2011 vintage was the coolest of the last three vintages, and though the fruit got as ripe as we wanted it (being an earlier ripener than Cabernet, for example), one can sense the effect of temperature in the slightly less forward fruit notes than in 2010, and higher acidity on the finish. The fig and lemon curd notes are abundantly rich, but they are more restrained than before, and the elegance in the nose is mirrored in the mouth. On entry, the wine has wonderful viscosity through the mid-palate and warm notes of French and American oak barrel. The wine finishes with wonderful focus and length. I think the length is another factor, mitigated by acidity as it is, that is a function of cooler weather. This small-lot Chardonnay was aged in French oak and American oak barrels (60% new, 40% second-use), for 16 months. Given the age-worthiness of Merrillie coupled with the tightness this new release is displaying now, I would recommend waiting 6-12 months to start drinking; the wine should age beautifully for 5-7 years.

After fruit was pressed off, the must was transferred to stainless steel tanks where it settled for about 48 hours prior to fermentation. The must was then transferred to barrel where it underwent both primary and secondary (malo-lactic) fermentation. The wine was aged *sur lie* for 16 months.

Only 198 cases were produced in this vintage.

### **HISTORY**

Merrillie is named for my paternal grandmother, and until recently, was the only white wine produced at the Steven Kent Winery. The first vintage, produced in 1999, came from the Folkendt Vineyard. The DeMayo Vineyard provided fruit for Merrillie through the 2004 vintage, and the Ernest Wente Vineyard is our new source. Though there are clonal differences and soils and exposures vary, the impeccable balance of this wine remains unchanged.

### **VINTAGE**

**Harvest Date:** September 2011

**Fruit:** Fruit from the Landucci Block, harvested around 25.0°. Alcohol 13.8%.

**Fermentation:** After destemming and crushing the fruit was left to settle in stainless steel for 48 hours before it was put into oak barrels. Primary and secondary (Malo-lactic) fermentation were done under cool temperatures in barrel. This wine was bottled without filtration or fining.

**Aging:** This wine was aged in American and French oak barrels (60% new, 40% second-use).

**Production:** 198 cases

**Release Date:** April 1, 2013

### **VINEYARD**

**Location:** Sourced from a site situated about 1.5 miles west of the Winery.

**Soil:** Sandy loam and clay.

**Training:** Vertical Shoot Position (VSP) trellising method.