



THE STEVEN KENT WINERY

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## 2014 "MERRILLIE" CHARDONNAY MISSION RANCH | ARROYO SECO

### HARVEST NOTES

Like most of the other wine regions of California, Arroyo Seco had one of the earliest harvests on record. Starting with bud-break as early as February in some vineyards, a very dry Spring and Summer led to harvest in August and September. Largely defined by the consistent and hearty winds that come rushing southward from Monterey Bay, Arroyo Seco and Santa Lucia Highlands have some of the longest growing seasons for grapes anywhere in the world. While harvest was early, the start of the season was as well. The relatively normal length of the season produced Chardonnay that maintained a beautiful balance between sugar and acidity.

### WINEMAKER NOTES

The Mirassou family – the oldest winemaking family in the United States – have been pioneers in a number of important ways. One of the most relevant in terms of this new Chardonnay release is that we were the first family to plant vineyards in modern-day Monterey County in 1961. What became known as the Mission Ranch, was a 200-acre parcel found on a drive to Southern California by my grandfather, Norb Mirassou. Planted to a number of varieties, Chardonnay (in the case of this offering – the "Robert Young" clone) excels in the rocky soil and cool climate of this site. The world-class quality of Arroyo Seco and the heart-thrum of family history persuaded us to try our hand producing a wine from this wonderful area. We are extremely happy with the results!

### TASTING NOTES

Aged on the lees for about 10 months and barrel-fermented in about 50% new French oak, three sub-lots of Chardonnay were blended and bottled without filtration or fining. Each sub-lot (of roughly equal size) was fermented with a different yeast regimen. For one portion we did "native" fermentation (letting the ambient yeast environment ferment the must) while the other lots were fermented with one of our favored cultured yeasts: CY-3079 and QA23. Each lot was wonderfully individualistic, differing in flavor, aroma, and texture. Together, they created a wine of finesse and elegance; mouth-filling richness underscored by precise, length-producing acidity.

### VINEYARD SOURCE(S)

100% Robert Young clone of Chardonnay from the Mission Ranch vineyard in the Arroyo Seco appellation.

### HARVEST DATA

September 29, 2014 | pH 3.34 | TA .67 | Alcohol 14.9%

### FERMENTATION

Merrillie was fermented in 50% new French oak barrels for approximately 10 months. The wine went through full malo-lactic fermentation.

### COOPERAGE

Approximately 50% new French oak barrels were used for fermentation and aging. Doreau, Damy, and François Frères were favored coopers. The wine spent about 10 months in barrel.

### CASES PRODUCED

522 cases

### RELEASE DATE

February 13, 2016



MERRILLIE

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