



## LATE HARVEST CHARDONNAY

VINTAGE 2018 • RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY • ESTATE BOTTLED

### IN THE VINEYARDS

One of the best things about growing grapes and making wine is that no single year is like any prior year and each brings unique challenges. Overall, 2018 saw a return to below average rainfall. Late spring rains kicked the growing season off to a great start although they were a couple of weeks late. A very warm summer brought our fruit progression in line with normal development timelines. August and early September brought another wild swing in temperatures with cool and foggy conditions. Our very first fruit was harvested from the Les Pierres vineyard about two weeks behind average. After the painfully slow start, our pace picked up in October. A beautiful fall finally led to rains in later November which really set the botrytis mold into motion for this wine.

Our 2018 harvest finished on December 4<sup>th</sup> with the Late Harvest Chardonnay — the latest day in the history of Sonoma-Cutrer. Fruit for this vintage was just the way we like it, riddled with botrytis, giving us lots of raisins without any pristine Chardonnay berries in sight. Tasting one of these unattractive berries delivers incredible, lush sweet flavors of honeysuckle and a medley of dried fruit flavors.

### OUR ESTATE VINEYARD

Fruit for this vintage was sourced from two of our Estate Vineyards. Block E at the Kent Vineyard is planted with clone 77. This clone produces wines with pungent floral, fruit forward characters and provided the foundation for the blend. Vine Hill, Block FF has clone 17 with its classic Chardonnay characteristics that helped to mellow and balance the more dominant clone 77. Parts of both blocks were partially picked in September for our Sonoma Coast blend while the remainder was left on the vine for more than two additional months for this Late Harvest wine.

### ON THE WINE

The unique character of Late Harvest Chardonnay is developed in the vineyard. The additional hang time and drying conditions add sweetness to the fruit. The botrytis, or “noble rot,” concentrates the sweetness and adds complexity to the flavors by slowly dehydrating the grapes from within the skins. Grapes were hand-harvested and whole-cluster pressed, 55% of the sweet juice was placed in a combination of new and one-year-old French oak barrels with the remainder going into stainless steel tanks for fermentation. Individual components were then blended to create our cuvée. The wine was bottled and allowed to bottle-age for a minimum of four months prior to release.

This vintage of Late Harvest Chardonnay has all of the renowned Sonoma-Cutrer elegance. Highly aromatic with fresh fruit and floral notes, the nose is dominated by white peach, dried apricot, baked apple, toasted almond and just a hint of honey, citrus zest and pie crumble. The wine is incredibly plush and viscous with sweet richness and a buttercream feel that is balanced by Sonoma-Cutrer’s signature crisp acidity. Fruit flavors of bright peach, nectarine, tangerine and apricot mingle with a lingering hint of pure honey.

Alcohol 10.9% • TA: 10.2gms/L • pH: 3.25 • RS: 16.8° Brix / 37.3 Brix juice • 100% Chardonnay  
55% Barrel Fermented in a mix of 60% new and 40% one-year-old oak, 45% Stainless steel fermentation  
Vineyard breakdown: 73% Kent floral clone 77; 27% Vine Hill clone 17



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