



AINTSBURY

2004 Brown Ranch Chardonnay

- 100% whole cluster pressed
- Barrel fermented in 40% new oak with the rest in 1 and 2 year old Taransaud and François Frères barrels
- Fermentations with both native and pure culture yeast
- Complete malo-lactic fermentation. Batonage (stirring) during barrel aging of 7 months
- Dijon clones 95 & 96
- 1,890 6-bottle cases bottled December 2005 and released in August 2006

We bought the Brown Ranch in 1990 with the aim of putting into practice all that we had learned about Carneros grapegrowing since we set out to showcase this region in 1981. When we were laying out this vineyard in 1992 with primarily Pinot Noir in mind we realized that there was a portion of the land that seemed very suited to Chardonnay cultivation. We planted eight acres of the Ranch with the then newly available Dijon clones of Chardonnay with the romantic names 95 and 96.

Our expectations have been exceeded. From the first small harvest in 1995 until 2000, the grapes were used in our Reserve Chardonnay. When we realized we wanted to take our luxury Chardonnay in a new direction, the natural choice was to create a single-vineyard Chardonnay as a sibling to the Brown Ranch Pinot Noir.

The character of our Brown Ranch Chardonnay grapes, their crisp natural acidity, the burgundy-like minerality and their expressive apple, pear and citrus flavors demanded we create a partner to our Brown Ranch Pinot Noir. As with the Brown Ranch Pinot Noir, only the best lots make it into the Brown Ranch Chardonnay bottling, with the remainder going into the delicious Carneros Chardonnay with predictable positive results. In addition, after seven months in French oak barrels we rack the wine to stainless steel tank along with the fine lees. The blend marries in this anaerobic environment for six additional months further enhancing the terroir-driven minerality of the Brown Ranch Chardonnay site.