



## 2006 CHARDONNAY “TOP CREAM”

*Estate Grown - Santa Rita Hills*

### Winemaker's Notes:

In the manufacturing of milk, the cream, or *top cream*, as it is sometimes called, is that fatty portion of the product that rises to the top during processing. Everyone is familiar with it. It's the stuff that makes corn flakes and lots of other things taste really good. Short of using butter, a top cream is often the business end of many of the culinary art's richest dishes. In our language, the very word *cream* is often taken to mean the richest or the best of something.

Twenty five years ago, my mom and dad planted the first vineyard on the 15 acre bench in the middle of our ranch. Its top soil is a 2 to 3 foot deep, grayish brown, gravelly loam that offers life to its vines on top of an ominously impervious layer of sandstone. It is a lean top soil in terms of fertility, and it definitely governs the vigor and morphology of the vines that grow in it. It is this soil that I refer to as this vineyard's Top Cream. As a terroir it is ideal for growing the kind of Chardonnay that spreads its wings when put through a full-blown Burgundian style of winemaking. It is especially appropriate if one considers that the facets of a Burgundian style; the barrels, the malolactic fermentation, and the lees contact, synergize for the rendering of a Chardonnay that smells and tastes, among other things, very creamy. The trick to it all is to have the right Chardonnay grapes to begin with, and the trick to having the right grapes is to have the right soil. Indeed, the trick is in having the right TOP CREAM.

Stealing the words from Wendy Van Horn, a colleague of mine, TOP CREAM produces wines that are “creamy, layered, refined, complex, long, elegant, substantial, weightless elegance, lemon curd, pear, apple, nut butter, . . .”

And with this, my third TOP CREAM Chardonnay, I think it is also interesting to note, this is an unfiltered wine. With a big red wine, a little cloudiness is almost a welcome sight for most of the cognoscenti. It's like confirmation that the wine has not been overly processed or bruised. But white wines are so transparent that floaties and other debris are frowned upon. The trick; how to get it off the lees, out of the barrels, fined and in the bottle this clear? Well, after 25 years, what can I say, we figured it out.

### Technical Notes:

#### VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

100% Chardonnay, Babcock Estate, Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County

#### VINIFICATION:

100% Barrel Fermentation; 100% Malolactic Fermentation

TIME IN BARRELS: 11 months; 100% French oak, 50% new

pH: 3.30      TA: 6.5 g/L      RESIDUAL SUGAR: Dry      ALCOHOL: 13 %

BOTTLING DATE: September 2007

RELEASE DATE: October, 2007

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 175 cases 12/ 750ml

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$45.00