



## 2007 CHARDONNAY "OASIS"

Loma Verde Vineyard, Los Alamos

*Santa Barbara County*

### Winemaker Notes:

My Top Cream Chardonnay has a foil, and what a good foil it is. OASIS is a small south-east facing hillside in the Loma Verde Vineyard, just off Highway 101 as you head north out of Los Alamos. If you know what you are looking for you can see the peculiar white streaks of soil that run under the vine rows. If you were touring around the west side of Paso Robles, you wouldn't think it peculiar at all. You see, in Paso's West Side, **limestone** abounds. But in Santa Barbara County, it's about as common as water in the desert. And yet, there it sits in a little two acre pocket of Loma Verde, at the end of the rows of block 3C, as they drop down from the bench upon which 80% of the block rests.

Was I *expecting* to find this little enigmatic piece of dirt? Not really. Over a year ago I was touring the vineyard with General Manager Tavo Acosta. Loma Verde in its entirety is about 218 acres. I was looking for 15 or so nice tons of reasonably priced Chardonnay to blend into my regular wine. Tavo was quite proud of most of the Ranch. The vines were healthy with balanced crops. It was obviously a reflection of someone who knew what he was doing. That's when I saw these scrawny yellowish vines struggling on a little hillside at the end of this one block. It was by far the most scraggly thing we'd seen, and I had the feeling Tavo was accelerating to get past it as soon as possible.

I asked Tavo, "If I find an area that I like, and it only takes up a portion of one of your blocks, is it possible to pick only the ends of the rows that are in that area?"

"I don't see why not," he said.

"What's that white stuff in the dirt right there?" I asked. "Limestone," he said.

"Is that why these vines are struggling?" I asked.

"Yea," he said hesitatingly.

"Is this section with the limestone available?" I asked.

I knew what he was thinking, 'Oh boy, another nut case winemaker.'

But to make a long story short, Tavo has been very open minded. He has done a great job of helping the vines in OASIS find the vigor and vitality that they desperately needed. The first time I saw OASIS I was only impressed with the soil. Now I see balanced vines and I taste incredible wines. This third bottling confirms that the sublime characteristics of the first two bottling were not a fluke; toasty marzipan with gobs of vanilla and buttery apple all presented in an unfiltered wine that has captured everything there is to capture in a great Terroir. In a word, its counter part, Top Cream, is *classic*; very Burgundian, higher acidity, greater minerality, and fruit character that is all about citrus and lime. In a word, Oasis is *delicious*; it's more Californiaesque -- fatter with more weight on the pallet. And you'd think it would be the other way around. You'd think the Burgundian result would come from the limestone. I guess it's another one of those things that you have to chalk up to the mystery of terroir.

### Technical Notes:

VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

100% Chardonnay, Loma Verde Vineyard, Los Alamos, Santa Barbara County

VINIFICATION:

100% Barrel Fermentation; 100% Malolactic Fermentation

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

pH: 3.54      TA: 5.6 g/L      RESIDUAL SUGAR: Dry      ALCOHOL: 13.5 %

BOTTLING DATE: September 2007      RELEASE DATE: October, 2007

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 227 cases 12/750ml      SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$45.00