

Sweeney Canyon

Vineyard

Background

Sweeney Canyon is a small, family-owned and operated vineyard in the Santa Rita Hills (Sta. Rita Hills AVA) of Santa Barbara County. It was planted by the Marks family, beginning in 1980, who have farmed it continuously ever since. Over the years the Marks have supplied Chardonnay grapes to a select number of local wineries, such as Babcock, Brewer-Clifton, Firestone, Gainey, Lafond, Longoria, Melville, Sanford, and Santa Barbara Winery.

The 18.5 acre vineyard is planted on its own roots in the deep, gravelly loam soils of the nearby Santa Ynez River. The vines have been “dry-farmed” for more than 20 years. Growing on a bench overlooking the river, the vines sink their roots deep into the alluvium, yielding rich and complex flavors in the fruit that is unique to this locale. Wines from Sweeney Canyon Vineyard are both graceful and powerful in aromatics, fruit flavors, acidity and texture.

Three generations of the Marks family have worked Sweeney Canyon Vineyard over the past 28 years. The family planted the vineyard in 1980 to 18.5 acres of the Wente clone of Chardonnay on its own roots. It is farmed without irrigation. In 2002 an acre of Chardonnay was grafted to Pinot Noir clone 777, and in 2007 an additional four acres was grafted to Pinot Noir clone 115.

Over the years the Marks have made small amounts of “personal consumption wine”, and in 2006 decided to “go public”. Chris Marks is the Vineyard Manager, with consultation from Krska Farming, and Kristi Marks is the family winemaker. Both Pinot Noir and Chardonnay under the Sweeney Canyon brand are produced.

“It is often said that wine is made in the vineyard. To make great wine, the grower and winemaker have to work in harmony, or be one in the same. This is why we only make wine from grapes we grow ourselves, from a vineyard that we planted specifically to produce great Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. “

Sweeney Canyon Vineyard wine traits:

- Estate Grown Chardonnay and Pinot Noir only
- Farmed naturally to showcase the essence of “place”
- Graceful and bold aromatics, fruit flavors, acidity and texture
- Extremely ageable
- Characteristics specific to terroir within Sta. Rita Hills AVA