

the hilt

The Hilt is defined by its three maritime influenced vineyards in the southwest corner of the Sta. Rita Hills appellation: Radian, Bentrock and Puerta del Mar.

The Old Guard and Vanguard wines are style-driven expressions. Vanguard is richly textured, opulent, and velvety, while Old Guard is all about structure. Old Guard wines are complex, energetic, taut, and firmly structured. Each “Guard” is a blended barrel selection of pinot noir or chardonnay in a well-defined style.

The Vanguard chardonnay opens with lush sensuality, and the finish is mouthwatering, focused, and palate cleansing. It is fermented in new French oak. The wine has a rich, opulent mouthfeel and ample mid-palate fruit. Vanguard chardonnays see around 30 percent malolactic fermentation, leaving the wines with its natural, nervy acidity.

2021

VANGUARD CHARDONNAY

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

CASES: 100

ALC: 13%

BARRELS: 11 months in 90% new French oak, 10% neutral barrels then 5 months in stainless tank

Golden peach and marzipan. Sweet cream and candied lemon peel. Incredibly silky and suave. Seemingly endless finish highlighted by wonderful acid tension and salty notes with sea salt flake crunch. Feijoa flower petals and a touch of flintiness. So much minerality. Big and dense, but also ethereal and glimmering with finesse. Already so multidimensional and pure in its expression; this wine is tightly coiled and will no doubt repay patience with expansive and exuberant fruit and unforgettable texture down the road. A true ball of energy, vibration and light. Fascinating, savory and full of pleasure. Graced with the delicate balance and remarkable length that the 2021 vintage will long be remembered for.

– Matt Dees, Winemaker

95 Points - Jeb Dunnuck *jebdunnuck.com* August 2023

A blend of sites, the 2021 Chardonnay Vanguard is similarly light gold-hued with a deeper bouquet of stone fruits, sappy flowers, chalky minerality, and a kiss of background oak and green almond. It's medium-bodied, beautifully textured, layered, and elegant, with the racy, cooler style of the estate.

93 Points - Antonio Galloni *Vinous* July 2023

The 2021 Chardonnay Vanguard is super-expressive right out of the gate. Layered and wonderfully polished, the 2021 has so much to offer. White flowers, orchard fruit, spice, slate and mint all open with time in the glass. There's quite a bit of potential here.