

BIRICHINO



2021 PETER MARTIN RAY CHARDONNAY

The Peter Martin Ray Vineyard is one of the most historic sites in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Peter's late father, the visionary Martin Ray, first planted vines here in the 1940s. For nearly 80 years, the two small blocks in the hills above Saratoga, retained by the Ray family after the remainder of the estate became Mount Eden Vineyards, have passed the test of time as the origin of some of California's most profound and age-worthy examples of Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. We are very fortunate to get a small amount of Cabernet Sauvignon – since 2017 – and Chardonnay – since 2019 – each year. The vineyard occupies a hilltop of shallow, Franciscan shale 1600' high above Silicon Valley. It has been farmed organically since being planted around 1980. The wines which emerge from here invariably convey a sense of both deep concentration and buoyancy, even at levels of ripeness and alcohol which are quite modest by today's standards in California. The plant material enjoys very fancy origins as well, having been brought to California in the late 19th Century from *Château Margaux* by E.H. Rixford in the case of the Cabernet Sauvignon, and from *Corton-Charlemagne* by Paul Masson, in the case of the Chardonnay.

While any attempt to recreate *Corton-Charlemagne* would be foolhardy, we employed a vinification protocol for this wine straight out of Meursault. After an early morning pick, our small allotment of grapes was pressed using a slightly extended cycle, and the juice was settled overnight. Fermentation proceeded without inoculation in three neutral French barrels. At the conclusion of primary, we transferred the wine to one neutral puncheon and one new French half-barrel to finish malolactic and its mid-year nap. Just before harvest, we transferred the wine into stainless to overwinter in a more reductive environment – a technique not uncommonly used to tighten up a wine for extended aging. We bottled the wine after a single rack in April without fining or filtration. It has a very long life ahead of it. -Alex and John

Harvest Date: Sept.9th, 2021
Composition: Chardonnay 100%
Appellation: Santa Cruz Mountains
Elevation: 1600'
Soil: Fractured Franciscan Shale
Farming: Organic
Alc.: 13.5%
Total Production: 6 barrels

