

GARY FARRELL

VINEYARDS & WINERY

2015 RITCHIE VINEYARD CHARDONNAY RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

VINEYARDS

Ritchie Vineyard is legendary in Russian River Valley, widely regarded as one of the best Chardonnay sites in all of California. The vineyard was first planted in 1972 to a handful of heritage selections, including Old Wente, and sits on a rolling northwest facing hillside in the heart of Russian River Valley, near the intersection of Trenton-Healdsburg and Eastside roads. The unique soil profile, comprised of Goldridge series sandy loam and a layer of volcanic ash deposits, creates wines with great intensity, which exude a rare purity and sense of place. For more than forty years, Kent Ritchie has farmed this vineyard with passion, precision and a loving touch. He pays personal attention to the wishes of each winemaker working with his grapes because, like the best growers in the area, he understands that the relationship is as important as the quality of the finished product that bears his name.

VINTAGE

The 2015 vintage was another great year for Russian River Valley wines. Every year we at Gary Farrell try to make wines that are more balanced than previous years and this was certainly a great opportunity for that. The wines are looking to have all the richness, texture, freshness, purity and intensity that that we want to see, and many with alcohols that will be well below 14%. The 2015 Chardonnay crop was moderately sized and quality was excellent. Although the harvest started early, it is important to note that the entire season of vine development began early. Thus, ample hang-time was achieved, and we're finding that the wines have excellent phenolic structure, beautiful concentration, and plenty of natural acidity – especially in the vineyards that were harvested early – and perfectly balanced alcohols. In the end, Mother Nature again filled our cellar with barrels and tanks full of some of the best, most balanced wines we've ever produced.

WINEMAKING

The grapes were harvested at 22-23° Brix in the cool morning hours to preserve freshness and fruit integrity, then each block was whole cluster pressed using a gentle press program tailored to the vineyard's grapes. After pressing, the juice was chilled to 45°F in tank, and allowed to settle for 24 hours before inoculating with Montrachet yeast. The wine was then transferred to 35% new French oak barrels (François Frères, DAMY, Dargaud & Jaegle and Cavin) for fermentation and 9 months of barrel aging. The barrel selection, a mixture of light and medium toast barrels and 500-L puncheons, was chosen to add subtle structure and aromatics, and to polish the finished wine without dominating its expression of terroir. The wines were racked off the primary lees only once, just before bottling.

TASTING NOTES

The 2015 Ritchie Vineyard Chardonnay is a hedonistic wine that possesses power, purity and finesse, all in one beautiful package. Aromas of lime blossom, flint, toasted cedar and kumquat peel tempt the taste buds before the first sip. The Wente clone packs lots of concentrated flavors into tiny clusters, yielding lush, dense flavors of honeysuckle, ripe peach, asian pear, spiced apple crumble and baked brie. The mid-palate offers an exquisite, oily, mouth-filling texture that is unique to this site, while the tangy, mouthwatering finish is delightfully persistent, with copious amounts of lemon and lime zest to keep the palate fresh.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

APPELLATION

Russian River Valley

VINEYARDS

Ritchie Vineyard

COMPOSITION

100% Chardonnay

AGING

9 months in 35% new French oak

ALCOHOL

13.9%

pH / T.A.

3.24/6.6gm/L

PRODUCTION

95 Cases

BOTTLING DATE

June 9, 2016

RELEASE DATE

June 2018

RETAIL PRICE

\$60