

GARY FARRELL

VINEYARDS & WINERY

2016 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 2016 vintage was an exceptional year for Russian River Valley wines. Harvest seems to start early every year now in Sonoma County, and this season was no exception. Much needed winter rains alleviated some of the drought pressure and vine development was able to begin early. This, coupled with a remarkably slow and steady ripening season, gave the grapes plenty of time to develop perfect balance, structure, and an amazing complexity of flavors. The 2016 Chardonnay crop was medium in size, while the quality and overall integrity of the fruit was among the best that we've ever seen at the winery. Cooler than average daytime highs and cold nights gave us the opportunity to pick the fruit exactly when it was ready, giving us wines that have tremendous concentration, finesse, and beautiful expression of place. We were fortunate to experience another spectacular vintage in the Russian River Valley, and are excited to see how the wines evolve as they age.

WINEMAKING

The grapes were harvested at 23° Brix in the cool morning hours to preserve freshness and fruit integrity, then whole cluster pressed using a gentle press program tailored specifically to the qualities of the vineyard. 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, Cavin and Remond), with just the right amount of light, fluffy, creamy lees for a healthy fermentation. 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 place. The wines were racked off the primary lees only once, just before bottling. After 9 months of aging, each barrel was carefully evaluated and the most elegantly structured wines were selected for this beautiful single vineyard wine.

TASTING NOTES

This limited Ritchie Vineyard release, composed of entirely Old Wente selection, is a classic example of rich, luscious Russian River Valley Chardonnay, with a backbone of minerality and acidity that keeps it crisp and lively on the palate. Aromas of key lime zest, nectarine and white tea leaves entice the palate, then the first sip opens up into an array of succulent flavors, including roasted Meyer lemon, white peach, lemongrass and wildflower honey. This wine is opulent and zesty, with an incredible palate weight and an oily texture that lingers on and on, into a nicely tart, mouthwatering finish.

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.

3.30/6.3gm/L

PRODUCTION

132 Cases

BOTTLING DATE

June 7, 2017

RELEASE DATE

February 2019

RETAIL PRICE

\$60