



GARY FARRELL

VINEYARDS & WINERY

2019 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

After record-breaking rainfall in late February, causing major flooding in the areas surrounding the Russian River, a relatively cool spring followed, delaying bud break into mid to late March. The delayed onset and cool temperatures would predict the beginning of harvest at a more typical date, compared to a few past vintages. The month of May brought more heavy rains. Thankfully, the cold temperatures and delayed start of bud break meant that bloom was later as well, and only a few vineyards had started to produce flowers, so damage to the crop was minimal. Summer temperatures were perfect and mild. By June, growers began to see that a big crop was forming. Come July, veraison was under way and growers had to drop lots of unevenly ripening clusters on several occasions. Despite the quantity of clusters per vine, flavor, concentration and tannin levels were quite excellent. Canopy management was extremely important in that fruit thinning was necessary at multiple stages of vine development.

Winemaking

The grapes were harvested on September 2nd in the cool morning hours at ~23° Brix. A quick pass was made through our rows a few days prior to harvest in order to drop fruit that didn't express the optimal flavor and concentration. As anticipated, the grapes that were delivered to the winery were packed with delicious, vibrant, varietally expressive characteristics. After a very careful hand-sorting, we combined all the fruit in the press, and used a gentle program to extract only the most desirable solids and phenolics. The resulting juice was left in tank to cold-settle overnight before transferring to 35% new and 65% one to three-year-old neutral French Oak Barrels and 500-litre French Oak Puncheons for fermentation and aging, where it remained for 9 months on its primary lees until it was time to bottle in June. The wines were racked off the primary lees only once, just before bottling.

Tasting Notes

Honeysuckle, Meyer Lemon, nectarine and Chamomile tea unfold initially, leading to richer, bolder aromas of honey and crème brûlée, all with a perfect hint of flintiness. Concentrated flavors of pear tart, lemon curd, lime zest and toasty brioche meld together seamlessly with the mineral backbone. Finishes with a tangy pop of acidity and a beautiful, creamy texture that lingers on the palate.

Appellation

Russian River Valley

Vineyards

Ritchie Vineyard

Composition

100% Chardonnay

Fermentation & Aging

9 months in 35% New French Oak

Alcohol

13.9%

pH / T.A.

3.25 / 7.2 gm/L

Production

273 Cases

Bottling Date

June 11, 2020

Release Date

May 2022

Retail Price

\$65