

GARY FARRELL

VINEYARDS & WINERY

2021 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

2021 was a spectacular vintage, especially considering the challenges of the past few years. It was a drought year, so Mother Nature was responsible for trimming yields and producing a plentiful and beautifully balanced crop. This was a nice contrast to previous drought years when the crop was very small, and the wines were more muscular. In 2021, the clusters were medium in size and the berries were plump with a good number of seeds, excellent skin to juice ratio and beautiful acidity. The summer months gave us beautiful ripening weather with very few heat spikes, allowing the grapes to ripen evenly, while having time to develop lots of flavor. Veraison began in mid to late July, and the weather until harvest was perfectly moderate, yielding excellent hang time and world-class wines.

Winemaking

The grapes were harvested in the cool morning hours at ~23° Brix. A quick pass was made through our rows a few days before harvest to drop fruit that did not 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 carefully 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 a tank to cold-settle overnight before transferring to 35% new and 65% neutral French Oak Barrels and a 500-litre French Oak Puncheon for fermentation and aging, where it remained for ten months on its primary lees until it was time to bottle in June.

Tasting Notes

Vibrant notes of lemongrass, crushed Kaffir lime leaves, and honeysuckle introduce this offering from the renowned Ritchie vineyard. Candied lemon peel and shortbread cookies mingle with hints of tarragon and dried wildflowers. The palate is focused and bright, with a flinty, mineral-laden backbone contributing to a remarkably long, zesty finish.

Appellation

Russian River Valley

Composition

100% Chardonnay

Fermentation & Aging

10 months in 35% new
French oak

Alcohol

14.0%

pH / T.A.

3.20 / 7.0 gm/L

Production

145 Cases

Bottling Date

July 15, 2022

Release Date

February 2024

Retail Price

\$75