

Destino

The journey is the destination...

The Vineyard ~

This elegant and expressive Chardonnay combines fruit from older vines of two of the most prized vineyards in the Russian River Valley appellation. Blending grapes from Dutton Ranch's cool "Sullivan Road" site in the Green Valley, with fruit from the Ritchie Vineyard, the 2003 Destino Russian River Valley Chardonnay is a rich, complex, Burgundian-inspired wine.

Located near the town of Graton, Warren Dutton planted the Sullivan Road Vineyard in 1973 with a selection of the Old Wente clone of Chardonnay. Today, these mature 32-year-old vines, grown in dusty loam, are remarkably self-limiting, producing consistently low yields of one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half-tons per acre of rich, structured fruit. Offering a warmer interpretation of hillside-grown Russian River grapes, the Ritchie Vineyard was planted in 1974 to a Robert Young field selection of three clones: Old Wente, Musque, and a mystery clone. Grown in well-drained rocky soils with outcroppings of volcanic ash and powdery topsoil, these vines produce low yields of complex fruit with perfumed aromatics and bright acidity.

The Wine ~

Combining the nuanced character of Dutton Ranch with the vibrancy of the Ritchie Vineyard, the 2003 Russian River Chardonnay has been handcrafted to reflect lush ripeness, seamless balance and sophisticated terroir-infused flavors. To achieve this vision, the fruit from both vineyards was picked at a target ripeness of 24 Brix (23.9 at Dutton, 24.2 at Ritchie). The grapes were then pressed in whole clusters, utilizing a membrane press in order to gently juice the fruit without breaking the skins, seeds or stems. Next, the juice was settled for 36 hours and racked for fermentation in French oak barrels. Primary fermentation was conducted at approximately 55 degrees Fahrenheit to promote a long, slow development of the fruit. To add complexity, three distinctive yeasts were employed: a Montrachet selection, CY3079 and native. The wine underwent 100 percent malolactic fermentation, with the lees being stirred twice weekly for 14 months. The 2003 Russian River Chardonnay was aged for 16 months in barrel and was given an additional six months of bottle aging to allow the wine's layered flavors ample time to fully integrate. To ensure quality and attention to detail, only 595 cases were produced for the 2003 vintage.

Tasting Notes ~

Inspired by the great whites of Montrachet with their signature mix of finesse, lightness, body and bouquet, the 2003 Destino Russian River Chardonnay is lush, sophisticated and balanced. The wine begins with soft, elegant aromatics derived from the Musque clone, before delivering rich notes of vanilla, ripe pear, butterscotch and fig on the palate. A complex and complete wine, the 2003 vintage marries structure with food-friendly natural acidity. The Destino 2003 Russian River Valley Chardonnay received a Wine Spectator score of 86.



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