



Wines & Vineyards ~ Notes

2004 Russian River Valley Chardonnay

The Vineyard ~

This 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 2004 Destino Russian River Valley Chardonnay is a 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 33-year-old vines, grown in dusty loam, are remarkably self-limiting, producing consistently low yields of 1.5 to 2.5 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 2004 Russian River Chardonnay has been handcrafted to reflect ripeness and seamless balance. The grapes were 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. The 2004 Russian River Chardonnay was aged for 15 months in barrel and was given an additional year of bottle aging to allow the wine ample time to fully integrate. To ensure quality and attention to detail, **only 612 cases were produced for the 2004 vintage.**

Tasting Notes ~

Inspired by the great whites of Montrachet with their signature mix of finesse, lightness, body and bouquet, the 2004 Destino Russian River Chardonnay is sophisticated and balanced. The wine begins with soft aromatics derived from the Musque clone, before delivering rich notes of vanilla, ripe pear and apple on the palate.