

Davis Family Vineyards

2001 Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, Dutton Ranch

What can I say that I don't say every vintage! The Dutton Ranch fruit is A+. Perfectly located and perfectly farmed. We get our 2 favorites blocks each year; both are more coastal than even our own vineyards. In 2001 these were the last grapes we picked, which is unusual for most wineries. Almost always the white grapes ripen long before the Cabernet. What is the deal about the cool weather for Chardonnay? Why is this "long hang time " so important? How does it really affect the actual flavors? All very good questions. Let me explain....

The foggy mornings of the Russian River begin with a layer of fog sitting close the ground; as things warm up through the day the grapes begin to ripen and begin to make sugar, but much more slowly than if they had hot weather from the minute they awoke... but this is where the magic starts... since the heat must *slowly* begin the ripening all over each morning the grapes take many more days to reach and build the sugar to consider the flavors to be sweet enough to be called ripe. The wonderful catch is that even though the sugars are not being made as quickly because the grapevine must start it's warming and ripening from a very cool place each day - flavor chains, or flavor elements are being formed and lengthened everyday...get it?

The longer and cooler the growing season to reach the right sugar level the more days that unique and complex flavors can be formed on the vine! This 2001 Russian River Dutton Ranch Chardonnay is a perfect example to taste/test this theory!!!.... When the first smell to the rich bouquet you will note this wine is different; unlike some hint of fruit, vanilla oak, and maybe a hint of butter like most California Chardonnay, you will smell pineapple, citrus, and floral tones. Wine writer Serena Sutcliff the expert on Champagne raved about the complexity of fruit and aromatic fresh ginger aromas of this wine, her last time in Wine Country.

The more you try to recognize the different aromas and flavors that this wine gives, the more you see that the complexity of a great chardonnay will refresh when the weather is warm, match well with any food that is not too spicy and lend often times more complexity and enjoyment than even your favorite reds. Next time you enjoy a glass of our Dutton Ranch Chardonnay, remember, these are sooo good because we make them the last grapes we let into the barn, kind of a tough love thing!

The last vintage was a featured "Wine of the Week" in the New York *Times* and made it all sold out before the end of summer, this Chardonnay is always our most awarded wine, and within that, this is my favorite Chardonnay that we have ever produced. That's the long way of saying that if you love great Chard, call Annie quick to take advantage of your "Friends of the Family" discount! I hope I will someday have the chance to show you all just how "coool" our Russian River Vineyards really are. Make sure and call for a private tour when you are in Wine Country.

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