

Davis Family Vineyards

2002 Russian River Chardonnay – Dutton Ranch

Some things are just meant to be; and Chardonnay grown in the soils and climate of the Russian River Valley is one of those things! We have our few favorite rows in the Dutton Ranch that have done it again – expressed the best side of the Chardonnay grape.

It feels to me that being the winemaker on this wine each year is actually being the midwife to this vineyard. If I do my job correctly and pick on the right day, pay attention to all the details and use my barrels and techniques only to season and keep balanced the already perfect fruit this wine cannot help but shine.

This is a pre-release to you **Friends of the Family** wine club members so all the awards are not in, however the first wine critic to taste the wine last week wrote:

"a masterpiece...both explosive and elegant...off the charts!"

(I cannot even mention the writer because the review will not be printed until the June issue!) To me this wine is liquid lemon custard! It has a bright, citrus side to the aromas and flavors, yet is also wrapped in lush, creamy nuances with a subtle hint of fresh brioche.

I really love Chardonnay in the spring time! This is a time of year we are emerging to the deck from the rains of the winter, to take in the beautiful colors of the new blooms...that means lots of sitting, staring at the gardens, the vineyards and the horizon and of course lots of sipping great Chardonnay! We start to eat less of the hearty dishes and more things like salmon and other seafood that fit perfectly with this wine.

That brings me back to the blessings of this Russian River climate for Chardonnay; the cool, coastal air leaves plenty of natural acidity in the grapes. This means as a winemaker I can add the lush, mouth-coating texture, so the wine is delicious to sip all by itself; but also keep a great crisp, refreshing side to enhance any of the great springtime foods!

The other great benefit of this cool coastal climate is the very long "hang time." That means the grapes stay on the vine until almost the end of October before complete ripeness is achieved. While the clusters slowly ripen on the vine all the flavor chains are being formed – the longer they "hang" the more depth and complexity of flavor we attain...not just one fruity character but many -- lemons, tangerines, apples, pears, floral, mineral – as the wine opens up in your glass, notice the layers that continue to unfold – these flavors are conceived in the rows of the Dutton Ranch vineyards and I just try to give birth to them once they arrive at the winery for "labor!" As with any child, I am really proud of this one, but the near-perfect growing season of 2002 made this an easy "delivery!"

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