



2007 RYO-FU CHARDONNAY

VINEYARDS	40% Keefer Ranch, 36% Heintz Ranch and 24% Black Emerald
BARREL FERMENTATION AND AGING	100% French oak, 39% new and 61% 2 year old barrels, fermented and aged 10 months sur lies
BOTTLED	July 2008
PRODUCTION	616 cases 750 ml

2007 may turn out to be a legendary vintage in the Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast appellations, not only for Pinot Noir, but also for Chardonnay. Everything seemed to go right in this long, even harvest. The only problem was for the growers who had a smaller than normal crop. But from a winemaking point of view, things couldn't have been better.

The largest contributing vineyard to the 2007 Ryo-fu is the Keefer Ranch which is located on the eastern side of the Green Valley appellation. Marcy Keefer and her son Craig Strehlow have supplied Freeman with some of our favorite Pinot Noir lots since 2004 and Chardonnay since 2005. The 2nd oldest vines Freeman contracts with are the Keefer's Chardonnay vines as they were planted in the mid 1980s.

For the fifth year in a row, Freeman has been one of the few lucky wineries which receive Heintz Ranch Chardonnay. Charlie Heintz farms his vineyard on a vine by vine basis. His ranch is located on the western side of the Green Valley appellation just northeast of the town of Occidental. The vines at Heintz were planted in 1982 and are the oldest that Freeman works with. His Chardonnay was the second largest part of the '07 Ryo-fu.

After taking a year off in 2006, we're thrilled to have Dennis and Mary Black's Black Emerald Vineyard back in the Ryo-fu Chardonnay in 2007. Their Vine Hill Road ranch has provided Freeman with some wonderful, fruit forward Chardonnay in the 2004, 2005 and 2007 harvests. Although it was just a few barrels in 2007, the Black Emerald fruit shines through the '07 Ryo-fu. Coincidentally, these are the third oldest vines in the Freeman portfolio, planted in the late 1980s.

The 2007 Ryo-fu could be the finest Chardonnay we have ever produced. Though we used a slightly higher percentage of new oak than in most previous vintages, wonderfully ripe tropical fruit scents dominate the nose with just a hint of toast, which is a testament to the strength of the 2007 fruit. The full palate strikes a seamless balance between rich, ripe fruit and more subtle, stone flavors. Although the '07 Ryo-fu will evolve and become more complex with a few years of bottle age, there is no need to wait—it is already drinking beautifully.