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## **Freeman Winery's 2015-2016 Chardonnay and Pinot Noir Releases from the Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast**

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Last week, we met with Ken Freeman, proprietor with his wife Akiko of Freeman Vineyard & Winery, to taste through his new Chardonnay and Pinot Noir releases from the Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast. Ken and Akiko launched the winery in 2001 and today produce some 6 thousand cases of first-class Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. The Freemans source grapes from their Gloria Estate Vineyard, Yuk-ki Estate Vineyard and top neighboring vineyards in Russian River Valley and the Sonoma Coast. Akiko serves as winemaker, having acquired her knowledge of viticulture and winemaking by apprenticing with veteran winemaker Ed Kurtzman who now serves as consulting winemaker.



We previously tasted the Freeman wines two years ago and were impressed with their quality. This year's new releases are at least as good. In general, the Freeman wines are approachable young and reveal excellent winemaking. This year we saw some improvements in some of the wines, especially in the Ryo-fu Chardonnay and the magnificent Pinot Noir, Akiko's Cuvée.

Freeman Winery is one of some 25 wineries that form the West Sonoma Coast Vintners (WSCV). These vintners are passionate about farming along the mountainous coastline of western Sonoma County. Following on our previous Report #44 *The Wines of Sonoma County*, the IWR plans to prepare a new report on the West Sonoma Coast wineries in 2019 to educate readers on the exciting developments



Ken and Akiko Freeman

taking place there.

## **Wine Reviews and Ratings**

**Freeman Winery 2016 Chardonnay Ryo-fu Russian River Valley (\$45) 92** This is a delicious Chardonnay, exemplary of the top producers in Sonoma Country. Picked early and fermented in 10% new French oak, the 2015 Ryo-fu Chardonnay offers bright tropical fruit aromas and flavors in a light and leesy format. It is beautifully balanced and reveals a crisp persistent finish.

**Freeman Winery 2016 Pinot Noir Russian River Valley (\$45) 90** The 2016 Pinot Noir Russian River Valley consists of grapes from the winery's Gloria Estate Vineyard (50%), Keefer Ranch (40%) and Sexton Vineyard (10%) and is aged 10 months in 30% New French oak. Russian River Valley in character, it is ripe and perfumed with aromas and flavors of dark cherry fruit. It is concentrated with firm tannins at this stage of development and needs additional time in the bottle for maximum drinking pleasure.

**Freeman Winery 2015 Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast (\$45) 90** A 50-50 blend of grapes from Campbell Ranch and the Yu-ki Estate Vineyard, the 2015 Pinot Noir Coast Pinot Noir exhibits the high acidity and freshness typical of Pacific Coast cool climate Pinot Noir. It offers medium-light red berry fruit aromas and flavors with considerable elegance and concentration on the palate.

**Freeman Winery 2015 Pinot Noir Yu-ki Estate Sonoma Coast (\$68) 91** The 2015 Pinot Noir Yu-ki Estate is an elegant wine offering light berry fruit and high acidity. It is a new wine in the line up since we last tasted Freeman Estate's wines and it is a welcome addition. It is not in the same league as Akiko's cuvee, but is still first-class.

**Freeman Winery 2015 Pinot Noir Gloria Estate Russian River Valley (\$68) 92** The 2015 Pinot Noir Gloria Estate is sourced from a 9 acre parcel in Green Valley planted with Calera, Swan and Dijon clones. It is soft and elegant on the palate revealing dark cherry fruit. Aged in 30% new French oak, it shows excellent balance and a persistent finish.

**Freeman Winery 2015 Pinot Noir Keefer Ranch Sonoma County (\$62) 93** The Pinot Noir Keefer Ranch is sourced from a 40 year- old vineyard planted with the Wadenswil clone in 1982. Dark ruby in color, it offers aromas of ripe black cherry and plum. It is soft and velvety on the palate with good concentration of flavor. Aged one year in 30% new French oak, which is nicely integrated.

**Freeman Winery 2015 Pinot Noir Akiko's Cuvee Sonoma Coast (\$72) 94** Akiko's Cuvee consists of the 10-12 favorite barrels of the winemaker, Akiko Freeman. It is a gorgeous wine, rich and classy with pure red berry fruit and hints of plum and violet. It is beautifully focused with firm round tannins and a persistent finish. An impressive wine, more elegant than the 2013 vintage we tasted a few years ago and shows great aging potential.