



# FREEMAN

VINEYARD & WINERY

SEBASTOPOL, CALIFORNIA, April 16, 2024: Wines made by Freeman Vineyard & Winery were featured at a State Department luncheon hosted by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Vice President Kamala Harris on April 11, 2024. The luncheon was held in honor of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Nishida, celebrating the close ties between Japan and the United States.

“Learning that our wines were selected to be poured at this luncheon was a total surprise” said Akiko Freeman, winemaker and co-owner of the Sebastopol, California winery. “Even better, we were invited to attend! I was pleased that they selected 2020 Yu-Ki Estate Blanc de Blancs sparkling wine, the 2021 Ryo-Fu Chardonnay, and our 2021 Akiko’s Cuvée Pinot Noir to be served with the menu that Chef Larkin had created for the afternoon.

“Akiko and I were blessed to be a part of such a memorable day at the State Department” said proprietor and co-owner Ken Freeman. “Our country has an amazing relationship with Japan, and it feels great to know that we are contributing to that relationship in our small way. Being in the room with so many business and political leaders was inspiring, and this inside view of the camaraderie and shared vision of our countries for the future was thrilling, to say the least.

The luncheon’s menu was conceived by Jason Larkin, Executive Chef of the State Department, with assistance from guest chef Masako Morishita of Maxwell Park in Washington, DC. The featured dishes included Asparagus Zucchini Pickles & Ricotta, Grilled Virginia Bass, followed by a Cherry Blossom Mousse with Coconut and Matcha Sponge Cake.

Chef Larkin said, “I consider it a great honor to be in a position to select the wines for the Secretary’s official entertaining.” Chef Larkin uses these events as an opportunity to showcase ties between the visiting country and the United States, with U.S. wines showcased at every event he puts together. “The Japanese heritage of Freeman Vineyards and the versatility of Akiko’s wines offered a broad palette of flavors and aromatics to work with” he says. “They allowed me to underscore some thematic and culinary ideas specific to this luncheon honoring Prime Minister Kishida — I like to think that Thomas Jefferson would be so proud that we are serving such wonderful American wines for diplomatic purposes.”

In addition to Ms. Harris and Mr. Blinken, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and other U.S. and Japanese government and business luminaries were in attendance.

Wines made by Freeman Vineyard & Winery are produced from organically farmed grapes grown in Sonoma County in Northern California. Akiko Freeman was recently awarded the Green & White Medal from the Dar Nihon Agriculture Society of Japan for her work in building bridges between the Japanese and American communities through her agricultural efforts. Using estate-grown grapes from their vineyards in the Russian River Valley and West Sonoma Coast AVAs, the winery has built a solid reputation for making balanced and elegant Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The Freeman wines can be enjoyed at fine restaurants and purchased from retailers around the world, as well as ordering direct via their wine club, “The Friends of Freeman.” 5% of all wine club revenue is donated to local, Sonoma County charities. Their Sebastopol tasting room is open year-round by appointment.

**Freeman Vineyards & Winery**

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For further information, interviews, photographs, or samples of Freeman wine, please contact Dan Fredman, [dan@danfredman.com](mailto:dan@danfredman.com), or 323.89.9463

Akiko Freeman and Secretary of State Antony Blinken at State Dept Luncheon in Honor of Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Nishida, April 11, 2024.

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