



2014 RYO-FU CHARDONNAY

WINE NOTES

VINEYARDS

46% Heintz Ranch
42% Keefer Ranch
12% Irwin

FERMENTATION & BARREL AGING

Fermented and aged 14 months *sur lies*
in French oak:
8% new
92% used

BOTTLING

December 2015

PRODUCTION

750 ml = 580 cases

Ryo-fu is Japanese for “cool breeze,” and 2014 marks the tenth anniversary of this wonderful Chardonnay. The cool, foggy breeze that comes off the Pacific Ocean makes it possible for the Russian River Valley to grow exceptional, high quality fruit. Sandy soil is crucial as well, but without the right temperatures, the grapes could ripen too soon or not at all. It is thanks to our own, Pacific *ryo-fu* that the Russian River Valley growing season is perfectly timed for Chardonnay.

The largest components of the 2014 Ryo-fu Chardonnay come from Heintz Ranch and Keefer Ranch. Heintz Ranch is located just southeast of the town of Occidental, on the western edge of the Russian River Valley appellation, where Freeman has purchased the same block of Chardonnay from Charlie Heintz since 2003. Planted in 1982, these are the oldest vines we work with at Freeman, and they give Ryo-fu its elegant, stone fruit and old world character. It could easily stand alone as a vineyard designate, as it did for Freeman in 2003, but we love how Heintz’s Chardonnay works in the Ryo-fu blend.

Freeman has purchased both Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Marcy Keefer since 2004, and Keefer is the only vineyard from which we receive both varieties. Their Chardonnay gives the Ryo-fu a backbone of acidity, and also provides some of the wine’s subtle fruit aromas. Keefer is located in the Green Valley sub-appellation of the Russian River Valley.

Jim Pratt’s home vineyard on Irwin Lane is new for Ryo-fu Chardonnay in 2014—coincidentally, planted to the exact same clone 4 as Heintz and Keefer. Irwin is located in one of the warmer areas of the Russian River Valley, on the Santa Rosa Plain, where the fruit gets just a bit riper than at Heintz and Keefer, closer to the coast.

With a light golden color, the 2014 Ryo-fu Chardonnay has a nose of hazelnuts, grapefruit, matchstick and *crème brûlée*. Refreshing lemon zest plays across a bright palate, accenting citrus and white peach flavors. The finish is surprisingly long, with lingering acidity and hints of toast.

The 2014 Ryo-fu Chardonnay should be at its best from mid-2016 to 2020.

