



2020 RYO-FU CHARDONNAY

WINE NOTES

VINEYARDS

54% Morelli Lane
46% Heintz Ranch

CLONES

UCD 4

FERMENTATION

Fermented in barrel and aged on lees.

BARREL AGING

10 months in French oak:
10% new
90% mostly neutral

BOTTLING

July 2021

PRODUCTION

750 ml = 250 cases



Ryo-fu is Japanese for “cool breeze,” a fitting name for this Russian River Valley Chardonnay shaped by the chilly winds that blow in from the Pacific Ocean. Our local ryo-fu, along with the region’s famous fog and sandy loam soil, create ideal growing conditions for this vineyard.

This was a challenging year for growers and wineries across California. The 2020 vintage had a promising start and looked like it would be the third spectacular year in a row following immensely successful crops in 2018 and 2019. On August 17, however, California was hit with thousands of dry lightning strikes that sparked wildfires up and down the state—including two in Sonoma County. Although our own vineyards and the winery were safe, Freeman was only able to harvest half the normal amount of Chardonnay for Ryo-fu, and we didn’t pick anything from Hawk Hill Vineyard in 2020 due to smoke taint. As a result, Ryo-fu is Freeman’s only 2020 Chardonnay.

Fruit from the Heintz Ranch and Morelli Lane vineyards make up the blend for the 2020 Ryo-fu Chardonnay. Heintz lies just southeast of the town of Occidental, on the western edge of the Russian River Valley appellation. Freeman has purchased the same block of Chardonnay from Charlie Heintz since 2003, and his are the oldest vines (*planted in 1982*) that we work with. Infusing Ryo-fu with elegant, stone fruit and Old World character, the Heintz Chardonnay could easily stand alone as a vineyard designate, but we love how it works in this blend. Morelli Lane is located just north of Heintz—it’s practically a neighboring property—and was planted in 1995 by the Dutton family. We bought Thomas Road Pinot Noir grapes from the Duttons for Freeman’s first vintage in 2002, and we have been working with them ever since.

The 2020 Ryo-fu Chardonnay has a brilliantly clear appearance and a complex nose of brioche, passion fruit, mangoes, sweet summer corn and crème brûlée. The lively palate is full of ripe pears, Gravenstein apples and untoasted almonds. The wine finishes with plenty of acidity and length. This should drink beautifully from 2022 through 2028.