



2022 RYO-FU CHARDONNAY

WINE NOTES

VINEYARD

57% Heintz Ranch
43% Dutton Ranch Shop Block

CLONES

UC Davis 4 and Sélection Massale

FERMENTATION

Fermented in barrel and aged on the lees.

BARREL AGING

10 months in French oak:
9% new
86% neutral

BOTTLING

July 31, 2023

PRODUCTION

750 ml = 505 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.

Aside from the continuing three-year drought, 2022 was an excellent growing season for western Sonoma County and the Russian River Valley. We experienced no wildfires, and other than a Labor Day weekend heatwave, this was a very typical harvest, although with a smaller-than-average crop size. Our Chardonnays were some of the last grapes picked in 2022.

Fruit from the Heintz Ranch and Dutton Ranch vineyards make up the blend for the 2022 Ryo-fu Chardonnay. Heintz lies just southeast of the town of Occidental, on the western edge of the Russian River Valley AVA. Freeman has purchased the same block of Chardonnay from Charlie Heintz since 2003. 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.

The Dutton Ranch Shop Block, located on Graton Road in the heart of Green Valley, is a new vineyard for Freeman. Warren Dutton planted it in 1967, which makes it—by far—the oldest Chardonnay vineyard we have worked with. The clonal material is a mystery since Warren chose cuttings from already-successful Chardonnay vines to plant at Shop Block. (This practice is known as Sélection Massale.) Freeman has sourced fruit from the Duttons since our first vintage in 2002, when we purchased their Thomas Road Pinot Noir.

The 2022 Freeman Ryo-fu Chardonnay has a pale, straw color and appears youthful in the glass. The complex aroma combines stone fruits, fresh hay, apples and lemon custard. On the palate, the wine displays a balancing act of high, refreshing acidity with a mouthful of wonderfully ripe Chardonnay fruit. A flavorful and refreshing finish predicts a long evolution for the '22 Ryo-fu, which will drink well from 2024 through 2030.

