



2016 RYO-FU CHARDONNAY

WINE NOTES

VINEYARDS

33% Heintz Ranch
31% Keefer Ranch
25% Searby
11% Lynmar

FERMENTATION & BARREL AGING

Fermented and aged 15 months *sur lies*
in French oak:
14% new
86% used

BOTTLING

December 4, 2017

PRODUCTION

750 ml = 807 cases



Ryo-fu is Japanese for “cool breeze.” The cool, foggy breeze that comes off the Pacific Ocean allows the Russian River Valley to grow such high quality Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. The area’s sandy soil is crucial as well, but without the right temperatures, the fruit could ripen too soon or not at all. Thanks to our local *ryo-fu*, the growing seasons are perfectly timed for our vineyards.

As usual, the largest components in our 2016 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. Since 2003, Freeman has purchased the same block of Chardonnay there, planted by Charlie Heintz in 1982. They are the oldest vines we work with at Freeman, and they give our Ryo-fu its elegant stone fruit and old world character. Wine from these grapes could easily stand alone as a vineyard designate, as it did for Freeman in 2003; but we especially love how it works in the Ryo-fu blend. Meanwhile Chardonnay from Keefer Ranch provides Ryo-fu with its backbone of acidity, as well some of the subtle fruit aromas found in the nose of the wine. Keefer Ranch is located in the Green Valley sub appellation of the Russian River Valley.

2016 marks a second year’s contribution from the excellent Searby Vineyard on Occidental Road—its old vines farmed by none other than Charlie Heintz (see above). And new this year we have grapes from the Lynmar Vineyard. They have been growing their own estate Chardonnay since the early ‘80’s, and it is an honor to be able to include a portion of their fruit in our Ryo-fu.

The 2016 Ryo-fu Chardonnay is a delightful wine that can be enjoyed much sooner than past few releases. The nose is a combination of delicate stone fruit and a lemon-cream character, without a hint of reduction or oak. There is a silkiness on the palate which is surprising in such a young wine. Fruit and acidity are effortlessly balanced, with no sharp edges. Enjoy this from 2018 through 2024.