



2011 RYO-FU CHARDONNAY

WINE NOTES

VINEYARDS

53% Keefer Ranch
47% Heintz Ranch

FERMENTATION & BARREL AGING

Fermented and aged 14 months sur lies
• 100% French oak
· 21% new
· 79% one-, two- and three-year-old barrels

BOTTLING

December 10, 2012

PRODUCTION

750 ml = 450 cases



2011 was one of the more difficult growing seasons in recent memory in the Russian River Valley, especially for Pinot Noir, but also for Chardonnay. There was frost in April and rain on June 28, right in the middle of the Chardonnay bloom. There were weeks in a row of all fog and no sun in July and August. And there were the September rains that are becoming more common as the years go by. After a year like that, it's amazing the Chardonnay we harvested in late October ripened as well as it did, and it's very good—wait 'til you try it.

The largest component of the 2011 Ryo-fu Chardonnay comes from the Keefer Ranch in the Green Valley sub-appellation of the Russian River Valley. Freeman has purchased both Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Marcy Keefer since 2004, and it's the only vineyard from which we receive both varieties. Marcy and her son Craig are two of the best farmers we work with and we're honored to make wine from their vineyard. The Chardonnay from Keefer provides the backbone of acidity to the Ryo-fu, as well some of the subtle fruits found in the nose of the wine.

Charlie Heintz's own vineyard makes up the rest of the blend in the 2011 Ryo-fu Chardonnay. Heintz Ranch is located just above the town of Occidental, on the western edge of the Russian River Valley appellation. Since 2003, Freeman has purchased the same block of Chardonnay from Charlie which he planted in 1982. They're the oldest vines we work with at Freeman.

2011 was only the second vintage in the past 8 years of Ryo-fu Chardonnay when we didn't pick the fruit at Dennis and Mary Black's Black Emerald Vineyard on Vine Hill Road. It's always the last fruit we harvest at Freeman, and in years like 2011 and 2006, the fall kicks into gear a little too soon before Black Emerald can ripen. We already know that Black Emerald will be back in the Ryo-fu for the 2012 vintage.

The 2011 Freeman Ryo-fu Chardonnay shows a medium straw color, with an initial high-toned, apple-scented nose that evolves with some air to reveal hazelnut and lemon aromas. Like the nose, the palate walks the line between a richer, medium-bodied Chardonnay and a lean, mineral-textured Old World style. As the 2011 Ryo-fu sits in the glass its youthful fruitiness begins to recede, replaced by more mature, old vine elements from the Heintz and Keefer Ranches. The finish leans more towards this wine's elegant side, with light stone fruit notes and refreshing acidity. Enjoy between 2013 and 2017.