



## 2008 RYO-FU CHARDONNAY

### WINE NOTES

#### VINEYARDS

44% Heintz Ranch  
40% Keefer Ranch  
16% Black Emerald

#### FERMENTATION & BARREL AGING

Fermented and aged 14 months sur lies  
• 100% French Oak  
· 20% new  
· 80% one and two year-old barrels

#### BOTTLING

January 2010

#### PRODUCTION

750 ml = 550 cases

As with the excellent quality of Pinot Noir in 2008, Chardonnay also had a terrific year in the Russian River Valley. Tonnages were minuscule compared with an average vintage, so flavor development, ripeness and intensity were the lucky results of this low crop. Acids were a bit higher in 2008 than in 2007, but overall the two vintages showed many similarities once the fruit was ready.

Since 2003 Freeman has been getting the same block of Chardonnay at Charlie Heintz's ranch on the western edge of the Green Valley. With a good yield in 2008, it makes up the highest percentage of the three vineyards in the '08 Ryo-fu. It's a true pleasure to work with Charlie and his world-class Chardonnay each year. Crisp acidity and subtle minerality are the major components we see from the Heintz fruit.

Next in terms of percentage of the blend in the 2008 Ryo-fu is the Keefer Ranch. It's the only vineyard from which Freeman receives both Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Marcy Keefer and her son Craig Strehlow farm both varieties to perfection, with the Chardonnay ripening about a month after the Pinot Noir. Their Green Valley vineyard benefits from exceptionally cool summers, and this leads to long hang times and fully ripe flavors.

Dennis and Mary Black set aside their half acre of east/west facing rows at Black Emerald each year for Freeman. Their vineyard is on Vine Hill Road, just across the street from Kistler, and is also not far from Dehlinger and Ted Klopp's home ranch in the Russian River Valley. With neighbors like these, it's no wonder that the quality of Black Emerald is apparent in the '08 Ryo-fu as it has been in the '04, '05 and '07 versions as well.

The 2008 Ryo-fu Chardonnay has much in common with our acclaimed 2006 vintage, echoing the same ripe, inviting aromas and the full, luscious palate that made the earlier version so sought-after. Our '08 Ryo-fu starts with a nose of baked apples, nutmeg, mangoes and almonds. Following these inviting aromas is a mouthfeel framed by good acidity, but dominated by ripe and delicious fruit. Even the well-integrated oak gets pushed into the finish behind the rich abundance on the palate. Though drinking beautifully now, the '08 Ryo-fu should develop well into 2012 and beyond.

