

Davis Family Vineyards

2003 Russian River Chardonnay, Dutton Ranch

To me the Duttons are the absolute first family in California Chardonnay! This is my seventh vintage buying Dutton Ranch Chardonnay and these vineyards never miss the mark. The two blocks we use are even more coastal than our own vineyards...by close to 10 miles!

Many producers harvest white grapes and then reds...but not these Dutton rows! They are always the last vines we pick...even later than our Napa Cab! That extended October "hang time" gives the clusters 3 to 4 extra weeks to develop more and more layers of vine ripened flavors - while remaining protected from becoming over ripe by the wonderful layer of fog that Mother Nature serves up each evening to the Russian River Valley. This fog also helps preserve the natural acidity in the wine, meaning that while layers and layers of ripe, rich flavors develop, the acidity lingers in the grapes so the final result also has a bright, juicy side to its complex character.

As you open your new 2003 Chardonnay test this theory out...Chill it down in your refrigerator and then pull the cork as you begin to cook dinner - pour a couple of ounces in your glass leaving lots of room to swirl and sniff. Let the cold Chardonnay begin to temper for a minute or two and then pick up the glass and before you even swirl it smell the aromas that have begun to rise up in the glass and take note, then give it a spin and smell it again, thinking not about the one big fruit filled aroma you get but which fruits those are, how many layers you notice...you may get aromas of lemon custard with scents of spiced pear and apple, many folks sense some tropical notes like papaya, mango and even pineapple, there are some delicate scents of orange blossom to some experienced noses ... take your time and try to appreciate all the complexities of the wine.

All these aromas are trimmed in nuances of a toasty character from the barrel that does not give the impression of oak but more the subtle impression of brioche or fresh baked pastry crust. Now taste the wine. The palate will be reflective of the aromas, but even more pronounced and now with textures...the bright, juicy citrus flavors dance across your palate as that lively acidity I described works in harmony with the glycerin-like, velvety soft richness that coats your mouth; then as you have swallowed the wine the lingering tastes in your mouth reflect those pears and an almost apple pie like finish...or do you get the lemon custard notes? Everyone will perceive the character traits in their own way but the point is to notice, savor and enjoy the variety and beauty of the complexity. That complexity from the long "hangtime" makes each sip and smell just a little different than the one before. That complexity separates great wine from just good wine; it is the magic that makes the wine continually evolve throughout the evening and the meal - making that last sip the very best sip!

One critic has already given this wine high marks and deemed it "both explosive and elegant...rich, viscous and delicious...white wine for the red wine drinker!" - BEVERAGE TESTING INSTITUTE gave it 90 points before we ever released it! This is my favorite Chardonnay ever and I made less than 500 cases, so if you need more at your discount be sure to call Annie right away!

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