

JOSEPH SWAN VINEYARDS

2916 LAGUNA ROAD, FORESTVILLE, RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY.
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2017 Chardonnay - Ritchie Vineyard - Russian River Valley

THE VINEYARD:

Located in the heart of the Russian River Valley, this wine comes from one of the oldest blocks of the vineyard. The vineyard is highly coveted with numerous winemakers sourcing from here. Everyone gets their own dedicated row (or half as the case may be). However, not all Ritchie Vineyard wines are created equal. Throw in personal preferences with at least one winery picking 2 weeks ahead of everyone else and a couple wineries on the other end of the spectrum. Leads to some very diverse wines. We fall somewhere in the middle.

WINEMAKING:

This old vine Dijon clone chardonnay was pressed immediately after harvesting and settled in tank for sediment to fall out by gravity overnight. Then, the juice was fermented in 30% new French oak barrels, the remainder in neutral French oak barrels, and aged sur lies with battonage (lees stirring) once a month. Full malolactic fermentation took place naturally. The wine was aged 10 months in barrel before bottling. 6 barrels produced.

THE WINE:

Ritchie Vineyard has always been known for its voluptuous wines and this one is no exception. Harvest from the older vines is often delayed. When sampling the grapes as harvest nears it is almost as if they are telling you to be a little more patient. The numbers are great and the flavors are nice but it often takes a bit of a longer wait before the hallmark Ritchie richness is apparent. It was barrel fermented in French Oak, about 1/3 of which was new, in order to tame some of its voluptuous fruit, and bottled after 14 months of aging on its lees. Bold, rich, ripe aromas of baked spiced apple and Asian pear lead to flavors echoing the aromatics with a complement of grilled hazelnut. A wine to drink on its own or to pair with poached scallops, grilled chicken or even pork tenderloin. (with ginger and toasted sesame?)

