

# ATELIER

2023  
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY  
CHARDONNAY

## SOURCING

Our pursuit of delicate and distinctive, sustainably farmed Chardonnay leads us to the Middle Reach neighborhood of Sonoma County's Russian River Valley, an area renowned for its cool, fog-laden mornings that maintain the grapes' natural acidity and freshness. Here, in the floodplain above the river, the combination of rich alluvial soils, silt, and river cobble creates fertile, well-drained conditions, ideal for cultivating Chardonnay with depth, complexity, and a true sense of place. We cultivate two vineyard sites south of the river's ocean-bound bend, only a short distance apart. Both are planted with California's renowned Chardonnay Clone 4 (a revered Wente clone) recognized for its small clusters, moderate yields, high acidity, and deep flavor. Our eastern block is grafted onto 110R rootstock and trained to a bilateral cordon, while the western block is grafted onto AXR1 rootstock and trained using a lyre system. The vine rows in both sites are oriented east-to-west, reducing sun exposure and allowing for extended hangtime.

## WINEMAKER NOTES

The grapes were hand-harvested at night, the coolest time of day, and placed into half-ton macrobins. These bins were delivered directly to the winery at first light, where the fruit was pressed. We chose a sparkling wine membrane press program for juice extraction, which is exceedingly gentle on the berries and prevents the release of undesirable stem and seed phenolics. After pressing, the juice was settled in a chilled stainless steel tank for 48 hours before being racked off the lees and transferred to French oak barrels. We take a light-handed approach with oak, and although the wine is 100% barrel fermented, only 18% of the barrels used are new. This careful selection helps us avoid overwhelming the wine with dominant oak characteristics. The juice was transferred into a mix of French oak barrels from Tremeaux, Damy, Toneleria Nacional, and Tonnellerie O, maintaining the 18% new oak guideline. The lots were further divided into sub-lots, each assigned to one of six different yeast strains, each chosen to enhance specific attributes of the fruit. Fermentation lasted approximately ten days, after which we performed battonage (stirring of the lees) to redistribute the yeast, aiming to enhance texture, aromas, and complexity. Battonage continued every two weeks for the first five months of aging. We inoculated half of the barrels with malolactic culture, aiming to develop the desired nutty creaminess reminiscent of brie rind and baguette. Once the desired character was achieved, we halted the malolactic process, topped the barrels, and sealed them for the remainder of the ten-month aging period.

## TASTING NOTES

Our cool-climate Chardonnay focuses on highlighting the purity of the fruit and the expression of its terroir. Elegance and clarity are the hallmarks of our style, with these qualities suggested in the bouquet and fully realized on the palate. As the wine is swirled and sniffed, its cool-climate origins become evident through a fragrant bouquet of blossoms, orange zest, honeycomb, and sea salt. On the palate, the focused yet luscious fruit profile of Clone 4 emerges with light to medium-weight stone fruit, most notably white peach, complemented by green apple and glacée lemon. These flavors are underscored by a subtle creaminess and a savory mineral note reminiscent of wet river stones.



**TECHNICAL**  
100% CHARDONNAY  
Alc 13.5% • pH 3.52  
TA 6.5 g/L • R.S. 0.18%