

# TOR

N A P A V A L L E Y

## DURELL VINEYARD

CHARDONNAY

2016

**VINEYARD** Durell has built a rock solid reputation for decades as one of California's premier vineyards. Our block is on the famed "Sand Hill" part of the vineyard, looking down on the Sonoma Valley. The soil is Gouling clay loam, mixed with diatomaceous earth, and millions of years ago formed a sand bar reaching into the prehistoric lake that covered the town of Sonoma. Like Kistler Chardonnay, we favor the "Wente Clone" in this vineyard, which is a selection of plant material that sets a small crop with small berries. The result is high skin-to-flesh ratio, great concentration of varietal character.

**WINEMAKING** Very Burgundian in style. Barrel fermented in small French cooperage, favoring premium three year dry aged barrels at a Medium toast level. The single new barrel cooper used is Saury. Fermentations begin with native yeast for primary and secondary, and the wines receive the minimal amount of handling through the aging period. Bottled unfinned, unfiltered; we work hard to bring honest and true expression of the vineyard to you.

**WINEMAKER'S TASTING NOTES** The 2016 Durell Chardonnay explodes from the glass with huge amounts of rich fruit, sweet butter, sea spray and lemon blossoms. The palate is very rich and seamless but with excellent natural acidity to provide lift and definition. The finish is rich, long and tails off to more white flowers.

**VINTAGE** We have now had five extraordinary vintages in a row, 2012-2016, all uniquely different, but all exhibit the hallmarks of excellence. 2015 and 2016 for us had the smallest crop levels of the run. In 2016 we averaged 30% down and in one Chardonnay vineyard a 70% loss due to a small cluster set. We wish we had more grapes.

2016 was a longer growing season than 2015, with more up and down temperature ranges than any of the five great consecutive vintages. That said, when I examine the temperature graphs for 2016 I note that we did not have many days over 100 and average day and night temperatures in the low 60s. That is cool. In summary, 2016 was another drought year that helped trigger a small crop load. Our Chardonnays are very rich wines, very complex from the get-go. Will 2016 be the best vintage of the five for chardonnay? Honestly, for some of the wines I think it has a very good chance of being the alpha vintage. Time will tell.

CASES PRODUCED: 325

