

TOR

TOR Chardonnay Two Rivers Ranch, Dijon Clone 2005

Vineyard

Thomas Brown, friend and winemaker, introduced me to this ranch just north of Yountville. I was intrigued for a variety of reasons; it is near the vineyard that often goes into Beringer's Sbragia Chardonnay: where there is a lot of rock. The block I chose was planted to Dijon Clones 95 and 96. Finally, Thomas tasted me on a 2001 vintage he made from this site-I was sold. It is old riverbed, rocky, good Chardonnay land.



Vintage

2005 is unlike any vintage in recent memory. Early bud break followed by wet, cool spring and cool summer. When the fruit set we witnessed a larger than normal crop, so we dropped more than 20% fruit at all our by-acre vineyard sites. We also dropped more fruit after veraison, hoping and praying the smaller crop would have the blessing of a long Indian summer to ripen. Prayers were answered and we picked into November for our reds. Beautiful fruit, mature flavors reflecting a growing season with the longest "hang time" I can remember in 30 years. Two Rivers Ranch was picked early morning September 26th 2006.

"Very sexy, expressive aromas of stone fruits and flowers. Supple, ripe and deep, offering a restrained sweetness as well as greater density than the Durell cuvee. The rich stone fruit flavors carry through in the mouth. Finishes suave and quite long."

Winemaking

We pick all our vineyard sites at first light so the fruit reaches the winery cold to cool. The Chardonnay grapes are hand sorted, then transferred whole cluster to a gentle bladder press, then still cool to small French oak barrels for fermentation. It is important to keep the juice cool on its journey to barrel preserving varietal character, each vineyard's identity.

Our Chardonnays are barrel fermented using only natural yeasts from the vineyard. Our desire is to never push the wine, but to let it take its own course. This Chardonnay fermented from November 2005 to June 2006, which is a very, very long fermentation. The wine remained in small French oak Saury barrels until bottling March 2007.

The Wine

Like previous vintages there is a distinct minerality to this wine which I like. In fact I think this wine has more minerality than 2004, 2003, and 2002 due to the coolness of the vintage. Less fleshy, more structured, but one of the bigger 2005 Chardonnays. With the mineral, I also taste the hallmark Macintosh apple, and oriental spice, with a layer of the Saury vanilla. Begs for a second glass.

Rating 91-93

**By Stephen Tanzer
"International Wine Cellar"**