



# *Sleeping Giant*

## **2015 Chardonnay “Buena Tierra Vineyard” Russian River**

Harvest Date: September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Brix at Harvest: 24.6  
Finished pH: 3.46  
Finished TA: 0.68 g/100 ml  
Vineyard Location: Buena Tierra Vineyard, Russian River, Sonoma County  
Blend: 100% Chardonnay  
Production: 189 cases of 750 ml  
Vineyard Manager: John Rauck

**History:** The “Sleeping Giant” is the section of mountain range of the Mayacamas that runs from the Northern edge of Mount Veeder in Napa almost up to the Yountville Veterans Home. It becomes the focal point of conversation as the sun sets on the Western hills. Chris Dearden has lived and produced fine wines in Napa Valley since 1986. A trained enologist from UC Davis, with an MBA from the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley, Dearden has pursued single vineyard wines for Shibumi Knoll, and V Madrone St. Helena and Chanticleer in Yountville. His Cabernets, Chardonnays and Italian varietals have garnered both critical and consumer acclaim since 1995.

**Harvest notes:** The 2015 vintage was excellent for the growth and production of the Buena Tierra Chardonnay from Sleeping Giant. The weather was picture perfect, began early with budbreak and ended early with harvest. No dramatic temperature or weather issues were seen during the budbreak, bloom, set or growing season. Early rains in February and March were just what was needed to avoid the drought having adverse effects on the crop. Small berries were welcomed and mostly a result of the dry winter preceding the growing season. The fruit on these old vines, which were planted upwards of 49 years ago, yielded excellent flavors and aromas.

**Winemaking:** The golden ripe fruit is whole cluster pressed and the introduction of “native” or “indigenous” yeast is the key element to winemaking for the BT Chardonnay. Stirring weekly adds the clean, yeasty notes evident in the wine. The fermentation is long and deliberate with malo-lactic fermentation sometimes completing six months after harvest. Patience is virtuous as good things do not happen overnight for this wine from these old, nutrient deficient vines, but the reward is worth the effort to make this highest expression of Chardonnay.

**Tasting Notes:** This is the third release from Sleeping Giant of the Buena Tierra Chardonnay although I have been making wine from this vineyard since 2003 for clients (when the wine was ranked as the top Chardonnay in the US twice). This wine has voluptuous aromas and flavors of baked apple, dried apricot, citrus honey, star jasmine, nutmeg, allspice, mandarin zest and crème brûlée. It is a great pairing with Dungeness Crab, Shrimp Scampi, Pacific Halibut, Brie Cheese and Sourdough bread. It is delicious now and will improve with 2-3 years of age. It will age gracefully through 2023. Enjoy this wine with friends and family and all occasions both grand and humble.

**90 pts. Wine Enthusiast**

**92 pts. Planet Grape-Master Sommelier Catherine Fallis**