

Dunstan - Chardonnay, Durell Vineyard Sonoma Coast

- Classic Sonoma Chardonnay from one of Sonoma's "grand cru" vineyards, featuring the Wente clone
- Exceptionally rich, complex character from barrel fermentation; balanced by halting malolactic
 - Small production—always sells out

The Producer

Located where three of Sonoma's finest AVAs converge, Durell Vineyard finds some of its best expressions in the bottlings of estate owner, Dunstan. Dunstan's tiny Ranch House Block is one vineyard's prime spots, where a concentration of volcanic soils and ideal temperatures create highly complex fruit. Winemaker Kenneth Juhasz (Auteur, Pali, Donum Estate, Robert Stemmler), focuses on clonal mix, perfect ripening and barrel fermentation to create rich and elegant wines that speak of their place.

The Dunstan story begins in 2005 when Ellie Phipps Price replanted 8.5 acres of land surrounding her home in the southern part of the iconic Durell Vineyard, which she co-owns with Bill Price. Aptly named the Ranch House Block, Dunstan's site includes 3.5 acres of Wente Chardonnay, and 5 acres of Pinot Noir, where Ellie chose a diversity of clones - Calera, Swan, Dijon and Pommard – to highlight the site's multifaceted character. The block is considered one of the three best in Durell Vineyard for its aspect, soils and climate.

This tiny block is nested in the 160-acre Durell Vineyard, considered one of Sonoma's "Grand Crus" with a history that dates back 40 years. The former ranch land was planted to vine in 1979 by Ed Durell and agriculture specialist Steve Hill, who worked tirelessly to develop it into a world-class vineyard. Within a few years, wines bearing the Durell name, such as Kistler Durell Chardonnay, validated the site's potential. By the 1980s three of Sonoma's best AVAs (Sonoma Valley, Sonoma Coast, and Carneros) were defined and incidentally all span the extraordinary Durell Vineyard.

The particular characteristics of each appellation converge within Durell Vineyard, providing a foundation for outstanding Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Durell benefits from afternoon breezes coming from the Pacific Ocean 30 miles west, as well as moderating effects of San Pablo Bay to the south, just 10 miles away. Sonoma Valley warmth brings full ripeness to Durell fruit. The soils are well draining with a permanence of volcanic ash and marine loam. Striations of Diablo Clay capture moisture and minimize irrigation.

Durell Vineyard has attracted some of Sonoma's finest personalities including Kistler, Chausseur, Chateau St. Jean, DeLoach, Robert Craig, Patz & Hall, Saxon Brown, Lutum, and Three Sticks. Durell Vineyard has been named as one of the top five vineyards in Sonoma County.

Dunstan brought on Kenneth Juhasz as winemaker in 2011. Juhasz dedicates himself to making premium Sonoma Pinot noir and Chardonnay, with an emphasis on full flavor development through farming and a light touch in the cellar.

The Wine

Rich, zesty and layered, Dunstan Durell Chardonnay is easy to love. The vineyard is planted to Wente – California's heritage clone, celebrated for its bright acidity and hallmark apple notes. The site's volcanic soils bring out a complexity to the fruit that is often found with vineyards considered "grand cru". Juhasz ages the wine sur lie in French oak to enhance richness and texture. With heritage, style and balance, this wine always sells out.



Region: Sonoma County

Appellation: Sonoma Coast

Vineyards: Durell Vineyard

Altitude: 400 ft elevation

Soil: Volcanic ash, red stones, marine loam, and Diablo clay striations

Varietal: 100% Chardonnay

Vine age: 11 years old

Planting system: Vertical Shoot Positioning (VSP) with double cordon

Yield: Average 2 tons/acre

Harvest: early September

Production: 447 cases

Vinification: whole-cluster pressed to barrel and fermented with native yeasts

Aging: 14 months in 100% French oak barrels (20% new)

Tasting Notes: With rich aromas of caramel and Pippin apple, the palate remains fresh with a brisk acidity and bright Meyer lemon flavors.