

	Retail	Savings
\$24.99	\$35.00	29%

2016 Laird Red Hen Estate Chardonnay product-timed-pdf - Oak Knoll, Napa Valley - Single Vineyard | Napa Valley Gem

Why We're Drinking It

Sounds a little bit country, but Red Hen Ranch (the “home vineyard” of Laird Family Estate) is serious business. Red Hen Ranch is prime The Oak Knoll District, a premier AVA north of the town of Napa that enjoys a climate several degrees cooler than St Helena or Calistoga due to the influence of coastal fog streaming in from nearby San Pablo Bay. Plus, the Chardonnay vines that thrive on this single-vineyard are just a few steps from the winery itself, which ensures that each bunch of berries brought in for fermentation is as fresh and perfectly juicy as the moment it was picked off the vine.

Combining toasty, buttery notes of pastry crust and oak with bright, acid-rich elements of pear and lemon zest, this supremely balanced Chardonnay makes a perfect pairing for delicate white fish like halibut and snapper. The wine was aged for 11 months in French oak, half new, and is also amply round and creamy to serve solo as a before-dinner sipper.

- The 2016 vintage saw the massive benefits of winter rain—after many years of winter drought. The early rainfall, combined with a warm, sunny spring and early summer brought in a healthy, large grape crop of gorgeous Chardonnay throughout the Napa Valley.
 - The Laird family is the largest private vineyard owner in all of Napa Valley, which means access to tremendous fruit.
 - When starting out 40 years ago, then novice vineyard owner Ken Laird picked Robert Mondavi out of a phone book looking for a knowledgeable consultant (Mondavi’s name was the only one he recognized!).
 - Consulting winemaker Brian Mox has fine tuned his talents for boutique reds and whites while at Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars, Pine Ridge and alongside superstar Tony Soter at Etude.
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Tasting Notes

From the winery:

With sophisticated aromas of freshly baked pastries and ripening pear, this unique wine will allure you to sweet memories of springtime. Juicy acidity on the front of the palate develops into notes of lemon meringue, brioche, and hints of oak spice, while the creamy finish is sure to satisfy your palate’s expectations.

VARIETAL
100% Chardonnay
APPELLATION
Oak Knoll, Napa Valley
ALCOHOL
14.60
SIZE
750ml
BLEND
100% Chardonnay

The Story to Know

From the winery:

Our story begins nearly sixty-four years ago outside of South Boston Virginia as twelve-year-old Ken Laird drove his mule wagon through tight rows of sticky, fit-to-be-harvested tobacco leaves. As the gooey bundles were thrown up onto the wagon, little Ken led his mule team to the curing barn. It was there, with his grandmother, great uncles and cousins, they would stoke smoky curing fires for their prized tobacco. Ken would be the third generation Laird to carry on the farming tradition.

While growing up to be a big city mechanical engineer in New York City, Ken held on to family tradition by buying his first Napa Valley parcel in 1970. This neglected piece of land, adjacent to Tubbs Lane in Calistoga, held 70 acres of

worn-down prune trees. With Prohibition forty years gone and Napa Valley positioned to re-emerge as viticulturally significant, Ken decided to develop the orchard into a grape vineyard. While knowing just short of nothing about viticulture, Ken was also \$150,000.00 short to properly develop the orchard into a respectable vineyard. Picking up a tattered phone book, Ken went to the yellow pages and found eight listed wineries...Robert Mondavi being the only one he recognized.

With a phone call, Robert Mondavi himself agreed to walk the property. After the two men discussed soils, vines, yields, irrigation, and proper pruning, Robert agreed to finance a deal with Ken if he would plant 50% Gamay. The deal was struck with a resulting vineyard of 50% Gamay and 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, Mr. Mondavi guaranteeing Ken's Cabernet "to be the highest harvest price paid in the Valley." The support and encouragement of Robert Mondavi would allow Ken to return to his passion: his family farming heritage.

And the rest is history.

Perfect Pairings

From the winery:

This wine is easily paired with a variety of dishes from spicy Pad Thai to a delicately poached halibut.

Ratings

94 *Insider Points*

Reviews

Home-Field Hero a Consistent Home Run

Guava, apple and oak notes dominate the nose. The palate gives fuji apple, golden pear and apricot, balanced out by creamy yet crisp texture. Enjoy now through 2021. An excellent addition to any Chard lover's life. *94 Points - JZ Sept 2018*