



Gary Farrell 'Russian River Selection' Chardonnay 2018, Sonoma County, Calif.

words: EDWARD DEITCH

This bright and balanced California Chardonnay is the model for a leaner style that defies the big-fruit, high-alcohol profile that has largely defined Chardonnay from the state. The temptation is to call it "Burgundian" in character, but that would be clichéd and simplistic.

On one hand, Gary Farrell's 2018 "Russian River Selection" Chardonnay showcases California fruit with its trademark opulence. But the fruit is not over the top, nor is the alcohol, listed at a restrained 13.3 percent. When was the last time you saw that on a bottle of California Chardonnay?



This also got me thinking about the 2018 vintage in Sonoma County, which was considered exceptional with a long growing season that brought concentration to the fruit while maintaining natural acidity. That pretty much sums up this Gary Farrell Chardonnay.

Its mouthfeel is mid-weight and its overall character is fresh and precise, with notes of pear, apricot, grapefruit, and Meyer lemon. There's a touch of salinity, and it's all framed by nuanced oak, which comes through as a subtle layer of vanilla and spice. The tastes really emerge as the wine warms up a bit.

Gary Farrell's 2018 "Russian River Selection" Chardonnay will be an excellent match for all kinds of fish dishes, lobster and scallops, roast chicken and turkey, and various cheeses. The suggested price is \$35, which puts it more in the "let's-have-a-date-at-home" category than an evening with you and Netflix.

Gary Farrell Vineyards & Winery sources the fruit for this wine from some of the top vineyards in the Russian River Valley, which is the model for all of its wines, most of them single-vineyard bottlings that showcase the individual vineyards with which it has partnered for years. Gary Farrell states that it produces "wines of balance, elegance and pure varietal expression," which describes this Chardonnay perfectly. The same goes for the winery's excellent 2017 "Russian River Selection" Pinot Noir, which I reviewed not long ago.