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Best New Releases from Sonoma and Beyond

- by Antonio Galloni
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Ramey Wine Cellars

The 2016 Chardonnays are a highlight in this set of new releases from David Ramey. As always, Ramey also presented a few older vintages, which show just how well the wines can age. Ramey picks a bit earlier these days, which gives his wines an extra kick of freshness that works beautifully to complement the intensity of the flavors he coaxes from a number of top sites—
Antonio Galloni, May 2019

92 2016 Ramey Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast

David Ramey's 2016 Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast) is a pretty, open-knit wine that will drink well upon release. Orchard fruit, lemon peel and white flowers all add brightness to this attractive, mid-weight Chardonnay. The 2016 is a wine of total precision and class. In this vintage, the Sonoma Coast Chardonnay is sourced exclusively from Charles Ranch. I loved it for its interplay of fruit and structure.

91 2016 Ramey Chardonnay, Russian River Valley

The 2016 Chardonnay (Russian River Valley) is another gracious, open-knit appellation-level Chardonnay from David Ramey. Pliant and inviting, it will drink well upon release. There is a brightness to the 2016 that is quite appealing.

95 2016 Ramey Chardonnay, Westside Farms Vineyard, Russian River Valley

Ramey's 2016 Chardonnay Westside Farms Vineyard is punchy and vibrant in the glass. Bright acids give notable tension and energy that perks up the citrus and white floral character. I would give the 2016 another year or so in bottle, as it is a bit tightly wound today. This refined, complex Russian River Chardonnay is long on class and personality.

95 2016 Ramey Chardonnay, Ritchie Vineyard, Russian River Valley

The 2016 Chardonnay Ritchie Vineyard is a standout in this range. Perfumed aromatics make a strong opening statement; white flowers, mint and white peach are all beautifully lifted. Refined and elegant to its core, the 2016 Ritchie is a fabulous wine. Don't miss it.

94 2016 Ramey Chardonnay, Woolsey Road Vineyard, Russian River Valley

The 2016 Chardonnay Woolsey Road Vineyard is one of the more overt wines in the range. Dense and exotic in the glass, it is rich, oily and immediately captivating. It will appeal most to readers who enjoy extroverted Chardonnays. Even with all of its richness, the Woolsey Road remains bright and nicely focused.

94 2016 Ramey Chardonnay, Rochioli Vineyard, Russian River Valley

The 2016 Chardonnay Rochioli Vineyard is powerful and dense in its first impression. It is also one of the more phenolic, structured Chardonnays in the range. There is a real sense of weight and textural resonance that runs through the fruit. Hints of lemon confit, dried flowers and dried pear meld into the creamy, layered finish.

94 2016 Ramey Chardonnay, Hyde Vineyard, Napa-Carneros

The 2016 Chardonnay Hyde Vineyard is a gorgeous wine that captures all the personality of this historic Carneros site. Ample, resonant and inviting, the 2016 offers baked apple, white peach, mint, chamomile and lemon peel notes in a super-attractive Chardonnay.

93 2008 Ramey Chardonnay, Ritchie Vineyard, Russian River Valley

Ramey's 2008 Chardonnay Ritchie Vineyard is gorgeous. It has also aged impeccably. Orange confit, crème brûlée, butter, smoke and hazelnut are finely knit in a super-expressive Chardonnay that hits all the right notes. The 2008 will drink well for at least another few years. Stylistically, the

2008 Ritchie belongs to an era when Ramey favored a slightly riper and more new-oak-shaped style than he does today.

92 2016 Ramey Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley

The 2016 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley) is an attractive wine to drink now and over the next handful of years. Bright red berry fruit, floral notes, earthiness and gamy notes all fill out in this fleshy, racy Pinot Noir. The inclusion of 25% whole clusters adds brightness, but the 2016 is done in the juicy, giving style that is a Ramey signature with Pinot.

92 2016 Ramey Syrah, Sonoma Coast

The 2016 Syrah (Sonoma Coast) is a gorgeous appellation-level wine. Black cherry, chocolate, graphite, licorice and dark spice infuse this bold Syrah from David Ramey. Sumptuous and inviting, it will drink well upon release. Very nicely done.

93 2015 Ramey Syrah, Cole Creek Vineyard, Russian River Valley

The 2015 Syrah Cole Creek Vineyard is bright, punchy and quite flavorful. Juicy red cherry, plum, chalk, white pepper, mint and blood orange create an attractive sense of brightness that nicely complements the rich, textured fruit. The 2015 spent two years in 100% new French oak.

94 2015 Ramey Syrah, Rodgers Creek Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

The 2015 Syrah Rodgers Creek Vineyard deftly balances fruit richness with the more savory, cold-climate notes that are typical of this site in the Petaluma Gap. Black cherry, cloves, new leather, licorice, spice and black pepper all run through this super-expressive, brooding Syrah. This is another wine in the range with terrific potential.

89 2016 Ramey Claret, Napa Valley

The 2016 Claret is soft, supple and fruity, making it an excellent choice for drinking now and over the next handful of years. This Cabernet Sauvignon-based blend offers plenty of immediacy and near-term appeal. Juicy cherry, plum, flowers, mocha and licorice notes infuse the creamy, silky texture of this inviting red.

92 2016 Ramey Template, Napa Valley

The 2016 Template, Ramey's Merlot-based blend, is super-expressive. Black cherry, chocolate, leather, spice, menthol and tobacco all build in this racy, sumptuous Right Bank-inspired wine. Dried flowers, mocha and spice add closing shades of aromatic nuance.

91 2015 Ramey Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

The 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley) is bright, punchy and super-expressive. Sweet red cherry, chalk, mint and floral notes give lovely brightness to play off the racy, beautifully layered fruit. David Ramey's Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is one of the best values readers will find in Napa Valley.

92 2015 Ramey Cabernet Sauvignon, Annum, Napa Valley

The 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Annum is soft, pliant and inviting, featuring plenty of bold fruit and plush, silky tannins that add to its considerable appeal. This is another racy, up-front Napa Valley wine from David Ramey.

93+ 2015 Ramey Cabernet Sauvignon, Pedregal Vineyard, Oakville

The 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Pedregal Vineyard is wonderfully expressive and nuanced in the glass. In this tasting, the Pedregal has a level of aromatic nuance and intensity that distinguishes it from the other wines in the range. Dried herbs, leather, licorice, tobacco, spicebox and cedar build in this super-expressive, nuanced Cabernet from David Ramey. The 2015 has come together nicely during its aging.

92 2008 Ramey Cabernet Sauvignon, Annum, Napa Valley

The 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Annum is done in a very ripe, flashy style. Plump, juicy and forward, it is just beginning to show the first signs of aromatic nuance and complexity. The 2008 has aged impeccably, even if the elevated ripeness of the year is impossible to miss. Most of the fruit came from the J. Davies vineyard on Diamond Mountain.

94 2009 Ramey Cabernet Sauvignon, Pedregal Vineyard, Oakville

Ramey's 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Pedregal Vineyard is super-expressive today. Chocolate, spice, tobacco, licorice and dried herbs give striking aromatic complexity to a rich, sumptuous Cabernet that hits all the right notes. Just beginning to soften, the 2009 has another 10–15 years of fine drinking ahead of it.