2012 Merry Edwards Chardonnay
Russian River Valley
Olivet Lane

The Olivet Lane estate in central Russian River Valley provides us with wonderful, highly flavored Chardonnay grapes. The rumor is that the bud wood was sourced some 40 years ago from the historic Wente Vineyards mother block. The mature age of the vines, the classic grape clone and this special site are a dynamite combination. Farming is carefully managed by Arturo Robledo, Junior and Senior.

If this Chardonnay were a woman, we would call her a drama queen. The fermenting wine requires special coddling with extra nutrient and vitamin additions. Lees stirring in barrel goes on for about nine months due to leisurely, extended yeast and malolactic fermentations. Her barrels enjoy sunbathing, so during warmer winter days, we accommodate this desire. She always makes it to the finish line for bottling in August, but does this in her own time!

The resulting jewel of a wine is certainly worth the effort. The inviting aroma is packed with luscious fruit — Golden Delicious apple, fragrant Seckel pear and sweet white peach. Accents of wildflower honey, lemon curd and toasted hazelnuts create additional mouthwatering complexity. The palate is weighty and rich but balanced with good acidity due to our cool climate.

To pair with this wine, I was inspired to re-create a dish served to me by Chef Cristina Ceccatelli in Sun Valley, Idaho. My own version of Tuscan Chicken served with steamed yellow potatoes and a fresh spinach salad is a delightful main course to set off this Chardonnay. You will find this on our winery Recipe Page at merryedwards.com.