

PLATINUM SERIES



Select, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers

When he was a little boy of 5, Chris Donatiello (Don-at-tee-l-oh) supposedly raided his parents' refrigerator for beer that he then sold to construction workers in his New Jersey neighborhood.

Years later, after completing his degree in Psychology at Oklahoma University, he put his early sales training to formal use in the wine and spirits business in New York. He eventually worked for a large New York distributor and was sent (in 1997) for a familiarization trip to Sonoma County and its surroundings.

"When I first got there," Donatiello fondly recalled, "I was taken aback by the area's rustic beauty and completeness. I loved Healdsburg and the Russian River Valley in particular and realized that it was a place where I would eventually wind up living."

His wholesale duties included representation of Belvedere Winery, a well-established Sonoma entity. In no time, Chris and Belvedere's owner Bill Hambrecht became close friends. Over time, the two explored the idea of getting into the winery business.

"I am extremely interested in Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, and many of the properties Bill owned in the Russian River Valley produced the very finest grapes around," added Donatiello. "In 2006, Bill indicated the timing was right and I decided to make the move west."

The rest of the story is the stuff novels are made from. The pair secured a 15-acre parcel on fabulous Westside Road (the Rodeo Drive of Sonoma County) that contained a rustic winery, a world-class aroma gardens area that features smells that compliment wines, and a tasting room that was among the best in Sonoma County. The new winery's first release of about 3,800 cases soon followed and was greeted with tremendous praise, high scores and accolades from practically every side. The fact that the winery chose a dramatic flower/grape inspired front label that is guaranteed to attract attention certainly didn't hurt the new wines' chances.

"With the great fruit to work with, I knew we could make some really good wines," Donatiello explained.

"What I wasn't prepared for was the great critical acclaim the wines received from people and some periodicals I had never heard of. It was a very humbling experience but one that made us try even

harder to replicate the initial quality people now expected from our wines."

C. Donatiello Winery has grown to about 5,500 cases for this year, and expects to continue its pattern of slow growth for the foreseeable future. Chris Donatiello says that it takes several years to develop a house style that can assure year-to-year consistency in the wines.

He also points to the great diversity of microclimates that are found in the Russian River Valley that allows him flexibility when making his company's wines. He believes that the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay coexist in a harmonious environment that is near perfect for both varieties within the confines of the Russian River Valley.

C. Donatiello Winery is also fortunate to have transplanted Virginian Webster Marquez as its winemaker. Marquez is a former assistant winemaker at nearby Williams Selyem Winery, long considered the first Sonoma winery to produce world-class Burgundian varieties in California.

Marquez has embraced the C. Donatiello philosophy of developing Pinot Noirs that are high in fruit and texture and big, muscular Chardonnays that are truly age worthy.

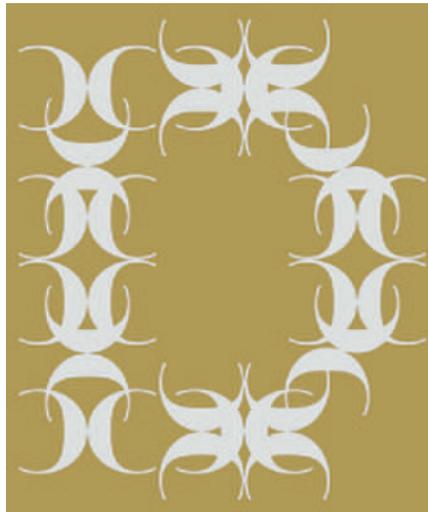
"We feel that most California vintners have lost the art of making Chardonnays that can stand the test of time," added Chris Donatiello. "If you think about all the great white burgundies that aren't ready for several years, you see what we are aiming for. The great whites rank high on many preferred lists and that's exactly where we want our Chardonnays to reside. It's all about the balance of fruit and acidity and I think we have the ability to do it right."

Chris still admits to spending most of his weekend at the winery's tasting room where he mixes with his friends and customers. He believes in interaction with his consumer base as a means of achieving his winery's lofty goals.

He is also very aware of his newfound status among the area's top wineries.

"When we came to Sonoma, we chose an area with a number of great wineries in close proximity. Now it's up to us to make wines worthy of being here," he finalized.

With his feet firmly on the ground, it's easy to predict even greater things ahead for this emerging new winery.



The road to great wine begins at your door.

TASTING NOTES



C. DONATIELLO WINERY

Dear *Platinum Series* Members,

I fell in love with the Russian River Valley on my first trip to the region in 1997. Years later I quit my job and moved here with the goal of doing what the Russian River Valley does best: Pinot Noir & Chardonnay. But not just any Chardonnay, something rich and powerful, yet balanced. A Chardonnay enjoyable now, but worthy of your cellar. A wine that will stand the test of time, and reward the patient in the tradition of great white burgundies.

The Orsi Vineyard sits on the benchland of the Russian River known as the Santa Rosa plain. Gnarly, 42-year-old, head trained vines project a face only a winemaker could love. The dry farming of this vineyard forces those old roots to dig deep, bringing water and nutrients from far underground.

Our Orsi Vineyard Chardonnay is consistently one of my favorites. The vines there produce small grapes on tight clusters. Combined with the dry farming, and age of the vines, those small grapes make a wine with bright fruit flavors and an underlying minerality. While we balance those bold flavors by fermenting in 100% French oak, only about 45% of it is new to help keep some of the more aggressive oak flavors in line.

I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

Sincerely,

Chris Donatiello

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TASTING NOTES

300 Cases Produced

C. Donatiello's 2008 Orsi Vineyard Chardonnay comes from a stunning bench land property between the Russian River and a range of hills to the east. First planted in the early 1970s, the Orsi Vineyard Chardonnay shows its maturity with substance, power, and incredible age ability. The fog and cool temperatures of the area retain acidity in the grapes, allowing for the production of intense, well-structured wines. The Chardonnays from this site display intense aromas of fresh Gravenstein apple and a crisp finish with bright acidity and a trace of minerality. Chris Donatiello calls his 2008 vintage lush, concentrated, and provocative with persistent, unapologetic flavors of bright fresh fruit, clove, and apricot marmalade. The aromatic notions of apple, banana, citron and grapefruit rind, with distinct traces of slate and baking dough, compliment the palate and make the 2008 Orsi Vineyard Chardonnay distinctive, and incredibly memorable. *Steven Tanzer's International Wine Cellar* awards the Chardonnay an outstanding **93 Points** and *Ken's Online Wine Guide* follows up with an additional **93 Point** score. An excellent Chardonnay that is delicious on its own, or complimented by a wide range of foods. Aged 10 months in French Oak. 100% Chardonnay. Enjoy now until 2014.

ORDERS

C. Donatiello Winery creates the kind of powerful, yet graceful wines the Russian River Valley is famous for, and the 2008 Orsi Vineyard Chardonnay is just that... elegantly structured, immeasurably captivating, and uniquely C. Donatiello. It's everything we love about Chardonnay. Enjoy!

The C. Donatiello 2008 Orsi Vineyard Chardonnay retails winery-direct for \$30.00 per bottle. As a *Platinum Series* member your very special pricing is as follows:

2-Bottle Members..... \$24.00 /bottle*

4-Bottle Members &

Multi-Series Members.....\$22.50 /bottle*

*2 bottle min. order [Plus shipping]

Call: 1-800-266-8888

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