

**Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards****2003 Chardonnay, Gravel Ridge Vineyard  
(Santa Cruz Mountains)**

Cooper-Garrod Vineyards is a family owned and operated winery on the site of a long-established fruit orchard in the hills of Saratoga. Jan Garrod manages the vineyards and Bill Cooper, son of George Cooper, a former NASA-Ames test pilot who founded the winery as a "retirement hobby," makes the wines at this charming and rustic spot. They grow all their fruit, and have been one of the only sources of Cab Franc in the appellation for several years.

This Chardonnay comes from the Gravel Ridge Vineyard, a 5-acre parcel in the hills, which was planted in 1979. With an elevation of 900 to 1k feet, and soils ranging from gravel to shallow clay, the vineyard is dry-farmed, and the vines enjoy warm days and cool nights, whether they like it or not. From the deep golden hue to the big honeyed nose, the cues this wine gives you do not lead astray. Typical Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay, this is one rich, lush beauty of a symphonic performance that demands to be savored.

It begins with the high notes of citrus, much like a piccolo, then mellows to the clarinets and other woodwinds, delivering some firm peaches, ripe Honey Crisp apples and Casaba melon. The acidity is just superb, and the touch of French oak, in which the wine was aged sur lees for 11 months, is right on, like just the right amount of raisins in your apple pie. The creamy texture fills your mouth like an pear crisp topped with cinnamon vanilla crème fraîche. Perfect with roast chicken stuffed with wild rice and apples and laced with apricot brandy.

Reviewed November 8, 2007 by [Laura Ness](#).

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**THE WINE**

**Winery:** [Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards](#)

**Vineyard:** Gravel Ridge Vineyard

**Vintage:** 2003

**Wine:** Chardonnay

**Appellation:** [Santa Cruz Mountains](#)

**Grape:** Chardonnay

**Price:** \$20.00

**THE REVIEWER****Laura Ness**

A wine writer and wine judge for major publications and competitions around the country, Laura Ness likens wine to the experience of music. She is always looking for that ubiquitous marriage of rhythm, melody, and flawless execution. What is good music? You know it when you get lost in it. What is good wine? It is music in your mouth.