

FORT ROSS

VINEYARD & WINERY · SONOMA COAST

2004 PINOT NOIR SEA SLOPES RESERVE · FORT ROSS VINEYARD · SONOMA COAST

OVERVIEW

From our mountain vineyard on the “True Sonoma Coast”, Fort Ross Vineyard produces limited amounts of Estate grown, cool-climate Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinotage. With spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean less than one mile away, the vineyard is divided into 28 separate blocks, one-half to two acres in size, traversing elevations ranging from 1200 to 1700 feet above sea level. Owners, Lester and Linda Schwartz and their small crew began preparing the 44 acre vineyard in 1994 and planting began in 1998.

VINTAGE

After a very early budbreak and warm weather that accelerated vine development, it looked as if we would have a bountiful crop of perfect grapes. The weather then suddenly turned cold during bloom and there was a very light berry set. Some blocks ultimately produced only a half a ton per acre. The climate was then moderate for most of the growing season but during August and early September there was a period of unusually hot and dry weather. We decided to wait for ripeness and were lucky that the weather cooled off. The vineyard's marine-moderated climate allowed the Pinot Noir to ripen slowly and fully into mid-late September when we harvested small berries with complete flavor development and lively acidity.

WINEMAKING

The grapes for this Pinot Noir were handpicked in the cool early morning hours in 5 gallon buckets from our very highest slopes. After gentle hand sorting, the fruit was cold soaked for several days and fermented in a combination of 1 and 5 ton fermenters. The caps were punched down 1, 2 or 3 times per day, depending on the stage of the fermentation. The wines were then barreled in a combination of 50% new and 50% used French oak. Throughout the 23 months of barrel aging, the clones and different vineyard blocks were kept separate to maintain their distinct flavor profiles and structural components as blending elements. After 23 months in barrel, the wine was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

TASTING NOTES

The densely opaque garnet-ruby hued Sea Slopes Reserve Pinot Noir reveals boundless dark cherry kirsch aromas that soar together with sweet currants, black tea, warm earthy spices and a touch of delicate rose petals. Opulent complexity and an expansive palate of ripe plums and black cherries are layered with undertones of cola and echoing hints of spice. A full-bodied velvety rich texture is ideally balanced by the undeniable signature minerality that speaks of the Fort Ross Vineyard. A long and generously plush finale lingers with graceful finesse.

COMPOSITION:	100% Pinot Noir
SELECTIONS:	Pommard, Calera and Dijon clone 115
ESTATE GROWN:	Fort Ross Vineyard
AGING:	23 months in 100% French; 50% new barrels
ALCOHOL	14.5%
ACIDITY:	.55g/100ml
pH:	3.66
BOTTLING:	Unfinned and unfiltered
BOTTLED:	September, 2006
CASES PRODUCED:	72 cases 750 ml
RELEASE DATE:	March, 2008