

FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

2011 PINOT NOIR SYMPOSIUM · FORT ROSS VINEYARD · FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

OVERVIEW

From our mountain vineyard that overlooks the Sonoma Coast and now part of the new Fort Ross-Seaview American Viticultural Area, Fort Ross Vineyard & Winery produces limited quantities of single vineyard, 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 30 separate blocks, one-half to two acres in size, that rapidly fall from 1700 down to 1200 feet above sea level. Owners, Lester and Linda Schwartz and their small crew began preparing the 50 acre vineyard in 1994. It took them 4 years of preparation before they could begin planting the first vines in 1998.

VINTAGE

On the Sonoma Coast we are used to dripping coastal fog and winter rains of up to 125" a year. The growing cycle generally starts late in this cool, maritime climate but the 2011 spring was unusually cold and wet. The vineyard remained dormant until May when the days suddenly grew hot and the vines burst into action three months later than usual. In June, during bloom, the clusters were well positioned on the vines. Then it rained once more resulting in far less cluster development than expected. During the cool summer the grapes did increase their pace to make up for lost time and miraculously developed vibrant flavors at far lower degrees Brix. With some hot weather the sugar levels did increase but still remained far lower than in previous vintages. Unexpected early fall rain, followed by thick fog, caused many vineyards to pick their crop before optimal ripeness. All around Sonoma County were horror stories of rot raging through the vineyards and grapes being picked at 19° Brix. Each of our blocks were left to ripen as long as the grapes remained healthy and made significant gains in flavor. Finally most of the vineyard was picked at about 22° Brix which converts into wine of approximately 13% alcohol. It was going to be a vintage of low alcohol levels. We were fortunate that the wild Sonoma Coast gave us another unexpected gift - time to wait patiently before harvest.

WINEMAKING

The grapes for this Pinot Noir were handpicked during the cool hours of the night in 2 gallon trays. After hand sorting, the fruit was cold soaked for several days and fermented in a combination of 5 and 10 ton tanks. The caps were punched down 1 or 2 times per day, depending on the stage of the fermentation. The wines were then barreled in a combination of 15% new and 85% neutral French oak. Throughout the 10 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. The wine was bottled unfinned & unfiltered. After extensive blending trials we decided on 97% Pinot Noir and 3% Pinotage.

TASTING NOTES

Aromas of dark fruits and black tea with a hint of sage perfectly introduce the black cherry and raspberry to the palate. Symposium is 97% Pinot Noir blended with just 3% Pinotage, which adds subtle notes of spice and earthy bramble. Ripe cherry echoes on the palate, where layers of lush plum and stone fruits intermingle with a whisper of nutmeg and vanilla.

COMPOSITION: 97% Pinot Noir, 3% Pinotage
APPELLATION: Sonoma Coast : Fort Ross-SeaView AVA
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: Pinot Noir: Calera, Pommard, Dijon 115 & 777 ~ Pinotage: MM1
AGING: 10 months in 100% French oak; 15% new
ALCOHOL 13%
HARVESTED: September 24, 2011 - October 2, 2011
BOTTLED: August, 2012 Unfinned & Unfiltered
RELEASE DATE: Fall 2014
CASES PRODUCED: 548 cases 750 ml
WINEMAKER: Jeff Pisoni