

FORT ROSS

VINEYARD & WINERY · SONOMA COAST

2010 CHARDONNAY · FORT ROSS VINEYARD · SONOMA COAST · FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW FORT ROSS BICENTENNIAL BOTTLING 1812-2012

Fort Ross Vineyard was selected to produce a special Pinot Noir and Chardonnay to commemorate the 1812 – 2012 Bicentennial of the old Russian Settlement of Fort Ross on the Sonoma Coast. This was the site of the first grape plantings in all of Sonoma County and even fore shadowed the plantings in Napa County. The winery was given permission from the Kunstkamera of the St. Peter the Great Museum in St. Petersburg to use the painting of the old fort done in 1841 by the famous naturalist, Il'ya Vosnesenky. The President of the Russian Federation is expected to attend the celebrations that will be both at the old Fort and at the Fort Ross Vineyard tasting room.

OVERVIEW

From our mountain vineyard, now part of the new Fort Ross-Seaview American Viticultural Area that includes the few steep mountain top vineyards that overlook the Sonoma Coast, 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

2010 began with a cold and rainy January and February. We began pruning in the middle of February as we try to start as late as possible to delay bud break until the weather at the coast warms up. There were record-breaking low temperatures during spring that led to a late bud break all over California. Ours was even later and took place during warm and stable weather leading to an excellent berry set. Summer was the second coldest in 50 years in Sonoma County. After this cool summer there was an intense heat spike in August. Fortunately our proximity to the ocean minimized the effects of the extreme cold and heat. We anxiously waited through very unstable weather while the flavors developed and began harvest on September 28th. The last grapes were picked on November 2 – and that afternoon the torrential rains began.

WINEMAKING

The grapes for this Chardonnay were handpicked during the cool hours of the night in small five-gallon buckets. The fruit was hand sorted in the vineyard and gently whole cluster pressed at the winery. After pressing, the juice was put into barrels and underwent primary and malolactic fermentation in a combination of 50% new and 50% used French oak. This discrete use of new oak allowed the fruit to shine. This wine is comprised of 65% small berried old Hyde field selection chosen for its richness and sleek structure and 35% small berried old Wente for its luscious fruit and grace. These heritage field selections have full, complex flavors that are intensified by the small size of both the bunches and the berries. For the special Bicentennial Blends we chose barrels with a softer, rounder wine profile as we would be releasing the wine earlier than usual to be in time for the celebrations.

COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay
APPELLATION: Sonoma Coast : Fort Ross-SeaView AVA
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: 65% Old Hyde - 35% Wente field selections
AGING: 10 months French; 50% new oak
ALCOHOL 14.1%
BOTTLING: Unfined & Unfiltered
HARVESTED: October 20, 2010
BOTTLED: August 1, 2011
RELEASE DATE: December, 2011
CASES PRODUCED: 89 cases, 750ml
WINEMAKER: Jeff Pisoni