

FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

Dedicated farming, Masterful Winemaking, Profound Wines

2018 PINOTAGE · FORT ROSS VINEYARD · FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST



From our mountain vineyard that overlooks the Sonoma Coast in the 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 32 separate blocks, one-half to two acres in size, that range in elevation from 1700 down to 1200 feet above sea level. Owners, Lester and Linda Schwartz with their small crew began preparing the 52 acre vineyard in 1994. It took them 4 years of preparation before they could begin planting. The year 2000 marked the first vintage from the Fort Ross Vineyard.

VINTAGE: The 2018 winter was wet and cool with a brief and unusual warm spell in February that woke up some of the dormant buds. The traditional cold weather resumed but then was interrupted by chilling frost and even snow! There was frost damage to several of our Chardonnay blocks and a some to a few Pinot Noir. This caused crop reduction but did not effect the exceptional quality of the vintage. Spring and summer were notably cool and was in fact one of the coldest summers we've seen in several years. The grapes enjoyed a long hang time on the vine and achieved ideal phenolic and aromatic development. Given there were no heat spikes, we were able to harvest slowly with great care and had the luxury to dial in the perfect time to pick. The vine development was so thorough that we incorporated some whole cluster fermentation that adds yet another layer of complexity to our Pinot Noirs. Pinot Noir was unhurriedly harvested between September 5–28, Chardonnay was picked September 26–27 and finally the slower ripening Pinotage on September 29th.

WINEMAKING: Pinotage was first developed in South Africa in 1925 by crossing the two vinifera varieties, Pinot Noir and Cinsault which was called Hermitage at the time. Our Pinotage consists of two Fort Ross proprietary clones, MM1 and MM3, developed at UC Davis from budwood personally imported by Fort Ross from one of the most select Pinotage vineyards in South Africa. The grapes for this Pinotage were handpicked during the cool hours of the night in small two-gallon picking trays. After hand sorting, the fruit was cold soaked for several days and fermented in a single 5 ton tank. During fermentation, the wine was pumped over and sparingly punched down, to carefully control the amount of extraction from the thicker skins in order to produce a well-balanced, age-worthy Pinotage. Shortly after pressing, the wine was barreled in a combination of 15% new and 85% neutral French oak for 10 months.

TASTING NOTES: While Pinotage shares many traits with Pinot Noir, there is an earthy brambleness that distinguishes it from its more famous cousin. Intense aromas of dark berry compote and lychee soar from the glass with hints of fragrant gardenias, white pepper and anise chiming in. This deep garnet Pinotage has a concentrated depth of bold flavors that envelop the palate with tiers of blackberry, cassis and black plum framed by baking spices and ginger. Prominent dark berry fruit is in complete harmony with the persistent tannins, balanced acidity and long, perfumed finish. The layered textural complexities and robust flavors pair beautifully with exotic spices, rich Italian food, smoked and grilled meats, anything from a wood fired oven and for the adventurous - sweet berry desserts. Prior to release, this wine was patiently cellared until optimal, but it will certainly age gracefully for years to come.

COMPOSITION:	100% Pinotage	HARVESTED:	September 29, 2018
APPELLATION:	Fort Ross-Seaview, Sonoma Coast	BOTTLING:	August, 2019
ESTATE GROWN:	Fort Ross Vineyard		Unfined & Unfiltered
SELECTIONS:	Proprietary Clones MM1 and MM3	CASES PRODUCED:	240 cases, 750 ml
AGING:	10 months in French oak; 15% new	WINEMAKER:	Jeff Pisoni