

# FORT ROSS

VINEYARD & WINERY · SONOMA COAST

## 2007 PINOTAGE · FORT ROSS VINEYARD · SONOMA COAST · FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW

### 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

The long, mostly cool summer allowed for steady development, giving the grapes a generous hang time to achieve physiological ripeness and full flavors. The spectacular weather during bloom was probably the best since the memorable 1997 vintage for coastal vineyards and the set was ideal, the finest in the 9 year history of Fort Ross Vineyard. The vineyard's marine-moderated climate allowed the grapes to ripen slowly and fully into early October when we harvested small berries with complete flavor development.

### WINEMAKING

Pinotage was first developed in South Africa in 1925 by crossing the two vinifera varieties, Pinot Noir and Cinsault. Our Pinotage consists of two Fort Ross proprietary clones, MM1 and MM3, developed from bud wood personally imported by Fort Ross from one of the most select Pinotage vineyards in South Africa. We vinify the variety much the same as our Pinot Noir. After hand sorting, the grapes were destemmed, cold soaked for several days and fermented in simple open-top fermenters and gently punched down to soften the influence of the thicker skins of the Pinotage berries. Shortly after pressing, the wines were barreled in a combination of new and used French oak.

### TASTING NOTES

While Pinotage shares many traits with Pinot Noir, there is an earthy brambleness that distinguishes it from its more famous cousin. Aromas dense with dark berries and leather mingle with underlying notes of spice and cedar. This , inky nearly opaque Pinotage has a concentrated depth of bold flavors that envelop the palate. Tiers of blackberry and black plum are enhanced by a whisper of smoke and saffras that carry through the intense finish of this well-structured wine. Its rich textural complexities are the perfect accompaniment to hearty meals, spicy foods and grilled meats.

COMPOSITION: 100% Pinotage  
APPELLATION: Sonoma Coast : Fort Ross-SeaView AVA  
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard  
SELECTIONS: Clones MM1 and MM3  
AGING: 8 months in 100% French oak; 25% new  
ALCOHOL 14.5%  
BOTTLING: Unfiltered  
HARVESTED: October 14, 2007  
BOTTLED: June 26, 2008  
RELEASE DATE: November, 2011  
CASES PRODUCED: 517 cases: 750 ml