

FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

2009 PINOTAGE · 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

2009 was an excellent year for the early ripening Pinot Noir and Chardonnay on the Sonoma Coast. The year began with a warm January but soon turned cold. The year was generally cooler than usual throughout the major part of the growing season and this coolness gave the wines their vibrant character. In the 3rd week of September there was a heat spike that concentrated the flavors that had been teasingly on the verge. The entire vineyard was harvested in four exhausting days to capitalize on the even ripening, intense flavors and luscious fruit. All grapes were harvested and in barrel before the damaging rains of October.

WINEMAKING

Pinotage was first developed in South Africa in 1925 by crossing the two vinifera varieties, Pinot Noir and Cinsault that was called Hermitage at the time. Our Pinotage consists of two Fort Ross proprietary clones, MM1 and MM3, developed at UC Davis from bud wood 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 5 gallon buckets. 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, ageworthy Pinotage. Shortly after pressing, the wines were barreled in a combination of new and neutral 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 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: 10 months in 100% French oak; 20% new
ALCOHOL 14.1%
BOTTLING: Unfined & Unfiltered
HARVESTED: September 25, 2009
BOTTLED: August, 2011
RELEASE DATE: March, 2013
CASES PRODUCED: 217 cases, 750 ml
WINEMAKER: Jeff Pisoni