

FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

2012 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 and their small crew began preparing the 55 acre vineyard in 1994. It took them 4 years of preparation before they could begin planting. The 2000 vintage marked the first vintage of Fort Ross Vineyard.

VINTAGE

The 2012 vintage got off to a very slow start. It was cold and wet throughout the spring so the buds did not swell until surprisingly late in the season. As budbreak was so late, the weather was generally warm and stable during bloom – except for one worrying rainy day that did not affect the crop – only our composure. With such a late start to the vintage, there was less time left to ripen the grapes so we dropped a fair amount of fruit early on so that each vine would have less fruit to ripen and the harvest would not stretch on into inclement weather. The season veered between cold and extreme heat. We harvested when the weather was cooler and we were very satisfied with the high quality of the fruit.

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 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.

TASTING NOTES

While Pinotage shares many traits with Pinot Noir, there is an earthy brambleness that distinguishes this varietal. Captivating aromas of dark fruit, elderberry and cassis are interwoven with hints of mocha, sandalwood and just the slightest hint of gamey notes in the background. This full bodied, nearly opaque, inky Pinotage has a concentrated depth of luscious bold flavors that envelop the palate with tiers of blackberry, dark plum and black currant with allspice and saffras all chiming in. The defined dark berried fruit is in complete harmony with the firm tannins, tight acidity and lengthy, composed finish. The textural complexities and intensity pair beautifully with exotic spices, Italian food, as well as smoked and grilled meats. This wine has been patiently cellared until optimal for release. It will continue to benefit from cellaring for years to come.

COMPOSITION: 100% Pinotage
APPELLATION: Fort Ross-Seaview, Sonoma Coast
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: Proprietary Clones MM1 and MM3
AGING: 10 months in 100% French oak; 15% new
ALCOHOL: 14%
HARVESTED: October 02, 2012
BOTTLED: August 2013; Unfined & Unfiltered
RELEASE DATE: Spring, 2017
CASES PRODUCED: 370 cases, 750 ml