

# FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

*Dedicated farming, Masterful Winemaking, Profound Wines*

2015 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.

**2015 VINTAGE:** Compared to the bountiful harvests of 2012, 2013, 2014 and again in 2016, the 2015 Vintage produced quite modest yields. Early budbreak was followed by relatively warm temperatures until May, when the temperature suddenly dropped to record breaking levels, which slowed bloom to set, producing variation in berry maturity and yield. The Pinot Noir was unhurriedly harvested between August 17 — September 8, one of the many advantages of growing grapes overlooking the cool Pacific Ocean. Chardonnay was picked September 10 — September 12 and finally the slower ripening Pinotage on September 24th. The lower yields delivered exceptional wines that are layered, focused and showing gracious purity. Ideal acidity levels are prevalent in all the wines, with well-developed tannins and structure for drinking now or for aging.

**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 30% new and 70% 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. Magnetic aromas of dark berries and lychee fruit are supported by hints of gardenia and white pepper notes. This deep purple Pinotage has a concentrated depth of bold flavors that envelop the palate with tiers of blackberry, loganberry and black plum framed by saffras and ginger. Prominent dark berry fruit is in complete harmony with the ripe tannins, balanced acidity and long, persistent 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 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2015
APPELLATION:	Fort Ross-Seaview, Sonoma Coast	BOTTLING:	August, 2016,
ESTATE GROWN:	Fort Ross Vineyard		Unfined & Unfiltered
SELECTIONS:	Proprietary Clones MM1 and MM3	CASES PRODUCED:	140 cases, 750 ml
AGING:	10 months in French oak; 30% new	WINEMAKER:	Jeff Pisoni