

FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

2012 CHARDONNAY · 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 range in elevation 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 year 2000 marked the first vintage from the 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 significant 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 quality of the fruit. Harvest began at the beginning of September and carried on through mid-October.

WINEMAKING

The grapes were handpicked during the cool hours of the night in small two-gallon picking trays then hand sorted in the vineyard and gently whole cluster pressed at the winery. After pressing, the juice was put into barrels and underwent primary and malolactic fermentation in a combination of 10% new and 90% used French oak. This discrete use of new oak allowed the fruit to shine. This wine is comprised of small berried old Hyde field selection chosen for its richness and sleek structure and small berried old Wente for its luscious fruit and grace. These heritage field selections have full, complex flavors that are intensified by the small size of both the bunches and the berries.

TASTING NOTES

The hazy pale gold hue is evidence of subtle stirring of the lees and bottling without fining or filtration. The decadent texture and layers of intense fruit finely intertwine with the vibrant acidity and minerality characteristic of the Fort Ross Vineyard's coastal terroir. Bright aromas of white flowers, apple blossom, and zesty citrus mingle with hints of marzipan and brioche to captivate the senses. Tiers of white peach and autumnal pear evolve on the broad palate leading to the crisp, expansive finish.

COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay
APPELLATION: Fort Ross-Seaview, Sonoma Coast
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: 80% Old Hyde - 20% Wente field selections
AGING: 10 months in French oak; 10% new
ALCOHOL: 14.2%
HARVESTED: October 6-7, 2012
BOTTLING: August, 2013 - Unfined & Unfiltered
RELEASE DATE: April, 2014
CASES PRODUCED: 447 cases, 750ml
WINEMAKER: Jeff Pisoni