

# FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

*Dedicated farming, Masterful Winemaking, Profound Wines*

2016 CHARDONNAY · 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.

**VINTAGE:** 2016 was another year of drought throughout California. Fortunately, Fort Ross Vineyard was not affected as the early December rainfall was sufficient to fill our irrigation ponds to capacity and even allowed us to have water at the end harvest. The ideal moderate weather on the coast leading up to harvest was free of heatwaves and rain, allowing the grapes to mature slowly and evenly to reach their optimal development. The Pinot Noir was unhurriedly harvested between September 3 — 20, one of the many advantages of growing grapes overlooking the cool Pacific Ocean. Chardonnay was picked September 17 — 26 and finally the slower ripening Pinotage on September 23 — 28. Our new block of Chardonnay, just off Meyers Grade Road had its first harvest in 2016 and the fruit is showing great promise. The lasting memory of the harvest is a vision of perfect bunches of grapes, with no side wings to delay the ripening, even berry size and a balanced crop hanging on the vines. These wines are vibrant and aromatic with excellent acidity.

**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 30% new and 70% neutral 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 low-yielding 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 golden hue is evidence of subtle stirring of the lees and bottling without fining or filtration. The refined texture and layers of bright fruit beautifully intertwine with the vibrant acidity and minerality characteristic of the Fort Ross Vineyard's coastal terroir. Captivating aromas of citrus blossoms, starfruit and honeydew melon sing with just a hint of almond to captivate the senses. The complex palate of classic yellow peach, apricot and poached pear with accents of lemon oil and hazelnuts unfold on the palate and carry through the expansive finish.

**COMPOSITION:** 100% Chardonnay  
**APPELLATION:** Fort Ross-Seaview, Sonoma Coast  
**ESTATE GROWN:** Fort Ross Vineyard  
**SELECTIONS:** Old Hyde & Wente field selections  
**AGING:** 10 months in French oak; 30% new  
**ALCOHOL:** 13.5%  
**HARVESTED:** September 17—26, 2016  
**BOTTLING:** August, 2017, Unfined & Unfiltered  
**CASES PRODUCED:** 508 cases, 750ml  
**WINEMAKER:** Jeff Pisoni