

# FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

*Dedicated farming, Masterful Winemaking, Profound Wines*

2018 MOTHER OF PEARL · CHARDONNAY · FORT ROSS VINEYARD · FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW



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:** The winter was wet and cool with a brief and unusual warm spell in February that woke up some of the dormant buds. The traditional cold weather resumed but then was interrupted by chilling frost and even snow! There was frost damage to several of our Chardonnay blocks and a some to a few Pinot Noir. This caused crop reduction but did not effect the exceptional quality of the vintage. Spring and summer were notably cool and was in fact one of the coldest summers we've seen in several years. The grapes enjoyed a long hang time on the vine and achieved ideal phenolic and aromatic development. Given there were no heat spikes, we were able to harvest slowly with great care and had the luxury to dial in the perfect time to pick. The vine development was so thorough that we incorporated some whole cluster fermentation that adds yet another layer of complexity to our Pinot Noirs. Pinot Noir was unhurriedly harvested between September 10–28, Chardonnay was picked September 26–27 and finally the slower ripening Pinotage on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

**WINEMAKING:** Mother of Pearl, with its captivating, lustrous iridescent facets, inspired the naming of this Chardonnay made from grapes grown on the highest Fort Ross Vineyard Chardonnay blocks. These 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 20% new and 80% neutral French oak. This wine is comprised of small berried old Hyde field selection chosen for its richness with a 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 slight haze in the golden hue is evidence of subtle stirring of the lees and bottling without fining or filtration. The generous aromas of honeysuckle, Meyer lemon and chamomile meld harmoniously with notes of toasty nutmeg. Medium-bodied, the palate offers luscious layers of ripe pear, juicy stone fruits, lemon meringue and marzipan. Fresh acidity winds its way throughout the lingering citrus and mineral laced finish.

COMPOSITION:	100% Chardonnay	HARVESTED:	September 26–27, 2018
APPELLATION:	Fort Ross-Seaview, Sonoma Coast	BOTTLING:	August, 2019
ESTATE GROWN:	Fort Ross Vineyard		Unfined & Unfiltered
SELECTIONS:	Wente & Hyde Field Selections	CASES PRODUCED:	205 Cases
AGING:	11 months in 100% French oak 20% new oak barrels	WINEMAKER:	Jeff Pisoni