

FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

2011 PINOT NOIR · 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 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

On the Sonoma Coast we are accustomed to coastal fog and winter rains of up to 125" a year. The growing cycle generally starts late in this cool, maritime climate but the 2011 spring was unusually cold and wet. The vineyard remained dormant until May, three months later than usual, when the days suddenly grew hot. In June, during bloom, the clusters were well positioned but a single rain resulted in far less cluster development than expected. During the cool summer the grapes did increase their pace to make up for lost time and developed vibrant flavors at far lower degrees Brix. With some hot weather the sugar levels increased but still remained far lower than previous vintages. Early fall rain, followed by thick fog, caused many vineyards to pick before optimal ripeness. All around Sonoma County were horror stories of rot raging through the vineyards and grapes being picked at 19° Brix. Each of our blocks were left to ripen as long as the grapes remained healthy and made significant gains in flavor. Finally most of the vineyard was picked at about 22° Brix which converts into wine of approximately 13% alcohol.

WINEMAKING

The grapes for this Pinot Noir were handpicked during the cool hours of the night in 2 gallon trays. After hand sorting, the fruit was cold soaked for several days and fermented in a combination of 5 and 10 ton tanks. The caps were punched down 1 or 2 times per day, depending on the stage of the fermentation. The wines were then barreled in a combination of 35% new and 65% neutral French oak. Throughout the 10 months of barrel aging, the clones and different vineyard blocks were kept separate to maintain their distinct flavor profiles and structural components as blending elements.

TASTING NOTES

With a beautiful deep garnet hue, this terroir-driven Pinot Noir entices with complex aromas of rose petals and bramble berries framed by a touch of forest floor and sassafras. The layered aromatics lead to a complex palate of blackcherry and bramble berries, with hints of subtle citrus and lavender. Silky, supple tannins, balanced acidity and mineral notes complement the focused dark berry fruit and earth that is revealed through the lingering, velvety finish.

COMPOSITION: 100% Pinot Noir
APPELLATION: Fort Ross-Seaview, Sonoma Coast
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: Calera, Pommard, Swan & Dijon clones 115 & 777
AGING: 10 months in 100% French; 35% new
ALCOHOL 13.5%
HARVESTED: September 24, 2011 - October 2, 2011
BOTTLED: August 2012: Unfined & Unfiltered
RELEASE DATE: March 2015
CASES PRODUCED: 926 cases 750 ml : 200 cases 375ml
WINEMAKER: Jeff Pisoni