

FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

2010 PINOTAGE · FORT ROSS VINEYARD · FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

OVERVIEW

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

2010 began with a cold and rainy January and February. We began pruning in the middle of February as we try to start as late as possible to delay bud break until the weather at the coast warms up. There were record-breaking low temperatures during spring that led to a late bud break all over California. Ours was even later and took place during warm and stable weather leading to an excellent berry set. Summer was the second coldest in 50 years in Sonoma County. After this cool summer there was an intense heat spike in August. Fortunately our proximity to the ocean minimized the effects of the extreme cold and heat. We anxiously waited through very unstable weather while the flavors developed and began harvest on September 28th. The last grapes were picked on November 2 and that afternoon the torrential rains began.

WINEMAKING

Pinotage was first developed in South Africa in 1925 by crossing the two vinifera varieties, Pinot Noir and Cinsault that was called Hermitage at the time. Our Pinotage consists of two Fort Ross proprietary clones, MM1 and MM3, developed at UC Davis from bud wood 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 5 gallon buckets. 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, ageworthy Pinotage. Shortly after pressing, the wines were barreled in a combination of new and neutral French oak.

TASTING NOTES

While Pinotage shares many traits with Pinot Noir, there is an earthy brambleness that distinguishes it from its more famous cousin. Aromas dense with dark berries and leather mingle with underlying notes of spice and cedar. This inky nearly opaque Pinotage has a concentrated depth of bold flavors that envelop the palate. Tiers of blackberry and black plum are enhanced by a whisper of saffron that carry through the intense finish of this well-structured wine. Its rich textural complexities are the perfect accompaniment to hearty meals, spicy foods and grilled meats.

COMPOSITION: 100% Pinotage
APPELLATION: Sonoma Coast : Fort Ross-SeaView AVA
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: Clones MM1 and MM3
AGING: 14 months in 100% French oak; 25% new
ALCOHOL 13.5%
BOTTLING: Unfined & Unfiltered
HARVESTED: October 21, 2010
BOTTLED: January 2012
RELEASE DATE: November 2014
CASES PRODUCED: 336 cases, 750 ml
WINEMAKER: Jeff Pisoni