



The deep maroon color foretells that there is a lot of wine in this bottle, and yet the ruby edges tease that it might not be all dark fruit. While we are still learning about the particular character of this unique vineyard site, all agree that the color that comes from Rancho la Viña fruit is astounding. A swirl surprises a bit with a heady pinot-esque nose of high-toned red fruit aromas of raspberry and very ripe plum mingling with floral nuances of rose petal and rocky earth. Just when you expected a burst of red berry on the palate, a taste reveals darker flavors of blackberry and cherry-cola, along with cherry pie and starfruit-like spice. Tannins, fruit and oak profile and acidity are nicely in balance, and the wine is pleasurable at release.

This vineyard-designated, one-barrel selection hails from the Rancho la Viña Vineyard, on the southwestern edge of the Sta. Rita Hills appellation. The vineyard was planted in 2005 to an elevated mesa with gentle slopes and low-vigor soils. The site is exposed to the daily fog and breezes from the nearby Pacific Ocean, resulting in petite clusters with tiny berries. We received a mix of clones 115 and 777 in our 1.5 ton pick.

2010 was a challenging vintage that definitely kept us on our toes. A very cool and cloudy springtime extended right into summer, with lingering foggy conditions each morning causing concern for excessive moisture in the canopy. The vineyard crew pulled more leaves than usual to open up the vines to airflow and sunlight, and were then 'rewarded' with a very hot heat spell at the end of August that accelerated ripening. The diva-like Pinot Noir clusters threatened to mutiny, and were hand-harvested on October 7th. It was certainly a nerve-racking vintage, but the extra-particular care that was taken resulted in an intensely flavored crop.

Upon delivery to the winery, the deep indigo colored grape clusters were immediately transferred to the cold room and then hand sorted for whole-cluster vs. de-stemmed candidates. Those with ripe stems were placed into the bottom of open top fermenters, with the balance de-stemmed to fill the rest of the fermenting bins. Foot stomped and mixed each day, the grapes were kept in the cold room to extract color, flavors and "spice" from the skins prior to fermentation, and then inoculated with RC212 yeast on October 13. A fast primary fermentation occurred, with the free run wine gravity fed to barrel and the skins gently basket pressed at the end of October. The wine aged in barrel until February of 2012 when blending trials and barrel selection was completed. One new Rousseau barrel included 1/3 each free-run from the three different fermenters and is the barrel chosen for this vineyard-designated bottling. It was bottled without fining or filtration in February 2012, and cellared in bottle until release in July of that year.

25 cases produced

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