

FORT ROSS

VINEYARD & WINERY · SONOMA COAST

2002 PINOTAGE · FORT ROSS VINEYARD · SONOMA COAST

OVERVIEW

From our mountain vineyard on the “True Sonoma Coast”, Fort Ross Vineyard produces limited amounts of Estate-grown, cool-climate Pinotage, Pinot Noir, and Chardonnay. With spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean less than one mile away, the vineyard is divided into 28 separate blocks, one-half to two acres in size, traversing elevations ranging from 1200 to 1700 feet above sea level. Owners, Lester and Linda Schwartz and their small crew began preparing the 44 acre vineyard in 1994 and planting began in 1998.

VINTAGE

Many have hailed 2002 as the finest vintage ever for California Pinot Noir. We are equally delighted with our 2002 Pinotage. Overall, the growing season was mild, with a few temperature spikes in May and June. July, August and early September were typical for the region – moderately warm days with a gentle dip in the temperature at night.

WINEMAKING

Pinotage was first developed in South Africa in 1925 by crossing the two vinifera varieties, Pinot Noir and Cinsault. Our Pinotage consists of two Fort Ross proprietary clones, MM1 and MM3, developed from bud wood personally imported by Fort Ross from one of the most select Pinotage vineyards in South Africa. We vinify the variety much the same as our Pinot Noir. After hand sorting, the grapes were destemmed, cold soaked for several days and fermented in simple open-top fermenters and gently punched down. Shortly after pressing, the wines were barreled in a combination of new and used French oak. The wine was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

TASTING NOTES

While Pinotage shares many traits with Pinot Noir, there is an exotic brambleness that distinguishes it from its more famous cousin. Our 2002 Pinotage is rich and well structured with firm tannins that are perfectly balanced by concentrated luscious fruit. Tiers of blackberries, strawberries, rose petals and a hint of smoke are enhanced by the spicy flavors that carry through to a lengthy, integrated finish. It is the perfect accompaniment to hearty meals, spicy foods and grilled meats.

COMPOSITION: 100% Pinotage
SELECTIONS: Clones MM1 and MM3
AGING: 19.5 months in 100% French; 60% new
ALCOHOL 14.5%
pH: 3.80
BOTTLING: Unfinned and unfiltered
CASES PRODUCED: 272 cases 750 ml, 45 cases 12/375 ml
RELEASE DATE: Fall 2005