

FORT ROSS

VINEYARD & WINERY · SONOMA COAST

2005 CHARDONNAY · RESERVE · 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 Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinotage. 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

The challenging 2005 Vintage on the Sonoma Coast produced a very small yield but made wines of outstanding intensity. During an unusually warm February the buds swelled and produced leaves only to be subjected to harsh cold and rain. As we had not yet gone through bloom during this wintry weather, the early indications were for a bountiful crop – within the norms of our very low vigor area. In June, just as the vines were in bloom and the berry set looked promising, there was un-seasonal rain that stopped many of the berries from developing, dramatically decreasing the crop. Like all the vineyards in the immediate area, our ultimate yield was about half a ton an acre but the wine produced was of exceptional quality, concentrated in flavor and color, thanks to the small clusters and diminutive berries that made it through the extended harvest, beginning in Mid-September and ending in October. This vintage can be summed up as:

“Quixotic weather + small crop = small clusters + tiny berries = fabulous wine!”

WINEMAKING

The grapes for this Reserve Chardonnay were handpicked in the cool early morning hours in small five-gallon buckets. The fruit was hand sorted in the vineyard and then whole cluster pressed at the winery. After pressing, the wine underwent primary and malolactic fermentation in a combination of 30% new and 70% used French oak barrels, the ratio of new to used oak carefully chosen so that the intensely concentrated and luscious fruit would not be masked by too much new oak. We selected the most distinctive barrels of Chardonnay and began the lengthy blending process by assessing if each additional barrel elevated the reserve blend and ultimately we delayed our bottling date as we felt that this blend needed more time in barrel to fulfill its great promise. The wine was racked and bottled without fining or filtration to maintain the natural color, flavor, texture and youthfulness of the wine. The final blend of this Reserve Chardonnay was selected from individual barrels chosen for their fruit concentration, complexity and balance. This wine is comprised of 100% small berried old Hyde field selection which has both richness and a sleek structure.

TASTING NOTES

Expansive aromas of perfumed peach blossoms, orange melon, apricot crumble and caramelized figs lure the senses, leading to a bounty of complex flavors built around white peaches, hints of citrus, delicately spiced hazelnuts with a touch of creamy oak. This golden hued wine has a seductively smooth texture that is perfectly balanced by the lively acidity and minerality characteristic of the vineyard. The initial silky roundness evolves seamlessly through the long, elegant finish. This well-integrated and finely-structured wine will continue to evolve for many years.

COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay
APPELLATION: Sonoma Coast
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: 100% Old Hyde
AGING: 11 months French; 30 % new oak
ALCOHOL 14%
ACIDITY: .53 g/100ml
pH: 3.79
BOTTLING: Unfined and unfiltered
HARVESTED: October 18, 2005
BOTTLED: September 6, 2006
RELEASE DATE: January 2008
CASES PRODUCED: 247 cases 750ml