

FORT ROSS

VINEYARD & WINERY · SONOMA COAST

2004 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

After a very early budbreak and warm weather that accelerated vine development, it looked as if we would have a bountiful crop. However the weather turned cold during bloom and there was a very light berry set. Some blocks ultimately produced only a half a ton per acre. The climate was then moderate for most of the growing season but during August and early September there was a period of unusually hot and dry weather. Being so near to the ocean we were able to wait for the desired level of ripeness and fortunately the weather cooled off. The vineyard’s marine-moderated climate allowed the grapes to ripen slowly and fully into mid-late September when we harvested small berries with complete flavor development and lively acidity.

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 earthy brambleness that distinguishes it from its more famous cousin. Aromas dense with ripe loganberry, roses and underlying hints of fragrant vanilla and wet-earth greet you. This dark inky hued Pinotage has a concentrated depth of bright, bold and luscious flavors that envelop the palate. Tiers of ripe blackberry, blueberry and a hint of smoke are enhanced by the spicy flavors that carry through to the lengthy, integrated finish of this complex and structured wine. Its appealingly bold textural components are the perfect accompaniment to hearty meals, spicy foods and grilled meats.

COMPOSITION: 100% Pinotage
APPELLATION: Sonoma Coast
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: Clones MM1 and MM3
AGING: 17 months in 100% French; 20% new
ALCOHOL 14%
pH: 3.81
HARVESTED: October, 2004
BOTTLED: March 3, 2006. Unfinned and unfiltered
RELEASE DATE: February, 2008
CASES PRODUCED: 170 cases 750 ml