

FORT ROSS

VINEYARD & WINERY · SONOMA COAST

2006 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

The long, mostly cool summer allowed for steady development, giving the grapes a generous hang time to achieve physiological ripeness and full flavors. The spectacular weather during bloom was probably the best since the memorable 1997 vintage for coastal vineyards and the set was ideal, the finest in the 9 year history of Fort Ross Vineyard. The vineyard’s marine-moderated climate allowed the grapes to ripen slowly and fully into early October when we harvested small berries with complete flavor development.

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 to soften the influence of the thicker skins of the Pinotage berries. Shortly after pressing, the wines were barreled in a combination of new and used 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 ripe loganberry, rose petals and black tea gracefully mingle with underlying notes of fragrant vanilla, nutmeg spice and cedar. This dark ruby hued Pinotage has a concentrated depth of bright, bold and luscious flavors that envelop the palate. Tiers of raspberry, blackberry and juicy plum are enhanced by a whisper of smoke and spicy sassafras flavors that carry through the smooth, integrated finish of this well-structured wine. Its rich, bold textural complexities 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: 11 months in 100% French; 7% new
ALCOHOL 14.1%
HARVESTED: October 11, 2006
BOTTLED: August 23, 2007
RELEASE DATE: November, 2008
CASES PRODUCED: 733 cases: 750 ml