

# FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

*Dedicated farming, Masterful Winemaking, Profound Wines*

2018 CHARDONNAY · FORT ROSS VINEYARD · FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST



From our mountain vineyard that overlooks the Sonoma Coast in the Fort Ross-Seaview American Viticultural Area, Fort Ross Vineyard & Winery produces limited quantities of single vineyard, 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 32 separate blocks, one-half to two acres in size, that range in elevation from 1700 down to 1200 feet above sea level. Owners, Lester and Linda Schwartz with their small crew began preparing the 52 acre vineyard in 1994. It took them 4 years of preparation before they could begin planting. The year 2000 marked the first vintage from the Fort Ross Vineyard.

**VINTAGE:** The winter was wet and cool with a brief and unusual warm spell in February that woke up some of the dormant buds. The traditional cold weather resumed but then was interrupted but a chilling frost and even snow! There was frost damage to several of our Chardonnay blocks and a some to a few Pinot Noir. This caused crop reduction but did not effect the exceptional quality of the vintage. Spring and summer were notably cool and was in fact one of the coldest summers we've seen in several years. The grapes enjoyed a long hang time on the vine and achieved ideal phenolic and aromatic development. Given there were no heat spikes, we were able to harvest slowly with great care and had the luxury to dial in the perfect time to pick. The vine development was so thorough that we incorporated some whole cluster fermentation that adds yet another layer of complexity to our Pinot Noirs. Pinot Noir was unhurriedly harvested between September 10–28, Chardonnay was picked September 26–27 and finally the slower ripening Pinotage on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

**WINEMAKING:** The grapes were handpicked during the cool hours of the night in small two-gallon picking trays then hand sorted in the vineyard and gently whole cluster pressed at the winery. After pressing, the juice was put into barrels and underwent primary and malolactic fermentation in a combination of 40% new and 60% neutral French oak. This wine is comprised of small berried old Hyde field selection chosen for its richness and sleek structure and low-yielding Wente for its luscious fruit and grace. These heritage field selections have full, complex flavors that are intensified by the small size of both the bunches and the berries. Reserve Chardonnay when is only produced when we have a few barrels that are exceptional. 2011 was the last vintage for Reserve Chardonnay. This 2018 was allowed to slowly age in barrel for 23 months, compared to our standard 10 months, so that we could offer our Club Members a very unique Chardonnay.

**TASTING NOTES:** Expansive aromas of perfumed summer peach, Cantaloupe melon and apricot preserve lead to a bounty of complex flavors built around white peaches, golden plums, delicately spiced hazelnuts with a touch of marzipan. This richly hued wine has a seductively smooth texture with pure intensity and depth of flavor that is rare in a coastal Chardonnay. The round mouthfeel evolves seamlessly through the long, elegant finish. This well-integrated and finely-structured wine is showing spectacularly upon this special club release.

**COMPOSITION:** 100% Chardonnay  
**APPELLATION:** Fort Ross-Seaview, Sonoma Coast  
**SELECTIONS:** Hyde & Old Wente field selections  
**AGING:** 23 months in French oak; 40% new  
**HARVESTED:** September 26–27, 2018  
**BOTTLING:** August 2020, Unfined & Unfiltered  
**CASES PRODUCED:** 112 cases, 750ml  
**WINEMAKER:** Jeff Pisoni