

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 29th.

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 30% new and 70% neutral French oak. This discrete use of new oak allowed the fruit to shine. 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.

TASTING NOTES: The hazy yellow hue is evidence of subtle stirring of the lees and bottling without fining or filtration. The rounded, rich mouthfeel is intertwined with the crisp acidity and stony minerality that is an expression of the high elevation and cool coastal climate. Pretty floral aromas of lemon blossom, chamomile and honeysuckle are balanced by hints of toasted hazelnut and honeycomb. On the palate Bartlett pear, golden delicious apples are layered with subtle baking spices, that linger through the long, full finish. This well-integrated and finely-structured Chardonnay will continue to evolve for many years.

COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay
APPELLATION: Fort Ross-Seaview, Sonoma Coast
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTIONS: Hyde & Old Wente field selections
AGING: 11 months in French oak; 30% new
HARVESTED: September 26–27, 2018
BOTTLING: End of August, 2019, Unfined & Unfiltered
CASES PRODUCED: 608 cases, 750ml
WINEMAKER: Jeff Pisoni