2002 Pinot Noir

Cohn Vineyard Russian River Valley Sonoma County

The Cohn Vineyard is on a rocky plateau overlooking the Russian River Valley with views as far as San Francisco. In a sparse landscape of displaced river rock and volcanic rubble, the gnarled vines struggle to produce a sparse crop of small berried bunches of delicious grapes. Yield in the 2002 vintage was a very low 1.5 tons per acre. Nature here is in balance; warm summer days with just the right amount of cooling afternoon fog, chilly nights, low humidity, plenty of rain in the winter, no rain in the summer, no pollution, peace. This balance and tranquility comes through in the wine.

The Vintage: 2002 has been reviewed by wine writers as being weak. Over the last three decades the even vintages have been weaker than the odd ones, but this pattern is beginning to change. 2002 was a bit wetter than was 2001 but the summer was dry, long and relatively cool. The picking season was perfect and crop sizes were average. The grapes were picked at full ripeness, the pH and acids were good, fermentations went well, everything was manageable. The 2002 Deerfield wines are exceptional. Most of us winemakers in Sonoma believe 2002 was a great vintage.

The Terroir: This is my favorite Pinot Noir appellation. The Russian River Valley is one of the two or three best places in the world to grow Pinot Noir. The combination of marine influence in the form of summer morning and afternoon fog, along with the warming, into the high 80's and 90's, in the middle of the summer day, makes this a uniquely suited place for Pinot. The soils are not too rich, the terrain is hilly and rocky, all contributing to the taste profile of the grapes grown here.

The Wine: Hand sorting is an important part of our winemaking practice. We cull under and over-ripe grapes, mildew and mold damaged, bird damage, any weird looking grapes, any leaves, green or dry. We don't capture the juice left from prematurely crushed grapes. This attention to sound fruit and clean juice clean wine. Clean wine not only tastes better it ages better and longer with less acid and tannin. Clean wine has fewer Histamines and requires less sulfite (SO_2) during the aging process. Histamines cause red wine headaches, SO_2 can cause allergic reactions. The SO_2 we do use, during the barrel aging and bottling process is at low levels and combines with oxygen in the wine becoming inert SO_3 by the time we release the wine.

that the best Pinot Noir is feminine in style. Delicate, multi-dimensional, strong where she needs to be, lovely and not easily forgotten. This wine is it. It's full flavored, has perfume in the nose and a long finish. It has soft tannins and low acid, good structure without being aggressive. She is unforgettable. This Pinot Noir will pair with more foods than will any other single wine. Let us know what you think. *Robert*

Harvest & Winemaking Data:

Winemakers: Robert Rex, Michael Browne

Harvested: September 12, 2002

At Harvest: 26.8 Brix; 6.0g/L acid; 3.65 pH,

Fermentation: 70% whole berries, open top fermenters, punched by hand,

Pressed out after 15 days. Max Temp. 88 F RC212,

Assmenshausen, William Selyem

Barrel aging: French oak, 4 coopers, for 19 months Fining & Filtration: Not fined, cross flow for solids

At Bottling 14.2% Alcohol; SO2 15ppm, no inhibitors added

Bottled: 440 cases on May 5, 2004 Released: November 15, 2005

Awards & Reviews: Decanter Magazine 3 stars, recommended

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