



Pinot Noir is a wine that always speaks to you – while on the vine, during fermentation, through barrel aging and through its life in bottle and on the table. Sometimes, though, this diva-like wine will *shout* from the barrel. With 2012, there was a single barrel selection of the Rancho la Viña Pinot Noir that compelled us to bottle it separately. A Diva indeed.

A beautiful clarity and the delicate color tricks the eye into thinking this will be a somewhat feminine styled wine. A swirl though, brings boyish notes of tobacco leaf and darker berry aromas that remind of dried blueberry, huckleberry and rosehips. A taste brings layers of plum-cherry, cola and appellation-specific earthy characters that remind of chaparral in the summertime. Beautifully balanced, with lively food-friendly acidity and soft but noticeable chalky tannins.

Sta. Rita Hills is a small appellation encompassing just 100 square miles located in one of the few transverse valleys in the western hemisphere. Its cool climate, ocean breezes, coastal fog and diverse soils come together to create the perfect climate for growing exceptional Pinot Noir. 2012 was a glorious vintage, with a “no-front spring” and an even, “normal” growing season. Early morning fogs predictably were pushed back to the Pacific by mid-morning and the vines enjoyed warm, sunny days until the ocean “breeze” kicked in early afternoons to keep the climate cool.

This vineyard-designated one-barrel selection is from Rancho la Viña Vineyard on the southwestern edge of the Sta. Rita Hills appellation. The vineyard was planted in 2005 to an elevated mesa with gentle slopes and low-vigor soils. The site is exposed to the daily fog and breezes from the nearby Pacific Ocean, resulting in petite clusters with tiny berries. Our one-acre “Seagrape block” is all clone 777, and we hand-harvested 1.82 tons on September 26, 2012.

Three quarters of the fruit was destemmed – the remaining quarter was left as whole bunches. It was cold-soaked for five days to extract color, flavor and tannin prior to the onset of fermentation. The must was inoculated with our go-to Pinot Noir yeast (RC212) and upon dryness moved to French oak barrels (including one new Sirugue barrel) where malo-lactic fermentation occurred and the wines peacefully aged. A decision was made to bottle the wine a bit earlier than our normal protocols to capture the pure essence of the spicy 2012 vintage, including this tiny, vineyard designated release from Rancho la Viña.

24 cases produced

\$40 per bottle

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