



The cool climate of the Sta. Rita Hills AVA is beautifully suited to growing Pinot Gris grapes that retain their varietal character and charm. A mutation within the Pinot family, Pinot Gris is a sibling of the region's renowned Pinot Noir, with grape skins that are neither white nor black, but exhibit more of a pinkish-gray russet skin color (hence the *gris* which translates to "gray").

Pinot Gris grapes themselves are so flavorful that one wants to extract all the goodness from the skins into the resulting wine. This 2019 release is a skin-contact Pinot Gris – a rosé made from "white" grapes. The color is a beautiful salmon color with translucent edges, which leads to a bouquet of rose petals and juicy, ripe stone fruit. The palate is crisp and focused with pear and peach and hints of watermelon (or is the color deceiving the taste buds?), and finishes with tropical reminders of key lime, blood orange and a little tannin suggestion of hibiscus tea.

Sta. Rita Hills is a small appellation encompassing just 100 square miles and located in one of the few transverse valleys in the western hemisphere. The cool climate, ocean breezes, coastal fog and diverse soils come together to create the perfect climate for growing exceptional thin-skinned grapes, such as those in the entire Pinot family (blanc, gris, noir!). 2019 brought us glorious rains in the early months of the year, a cool and foggy springtime, and a warm (but not hot) summer. "Back to normal" comes to mind, with harvest beginning with the Gris in mid-September.

Just 150 vines of the russet-colored grapes of Pinot Gris are found interspersed within the pinot noir and chardonnay at the Hibbits Ranch vineyard on the far western edge of the appellation. The vines are kissed by the early morning fog and afternoon breezes of the cool climate Sta. Rita Hills, resulting in grapes harvested at optimal balance of acidity, flavor, and sugar. We picked 1320 pounds (.66 ton!) on September 16th at 22.4° brix.

With a traditional rosé, skin contact time is limited on the red winegrapes being used. But in this somewhat opposite method, skin contact time is increased to extract all the loveliness from the skins. The petite clusters were de-stemmed, foot stomped and left on skins in the cold room for 48 hours to extract color and flavor from the russet-colored skins before gently pressing to a small stainless-steel tank. And wow – so pink this year! The juice was then racked to two stainless steel "barrels" and inoculated with Alchemy yeast for a nice, long cool fermentation in the cold room. Once dry, the wine was moved to the cellar with bi-weekly lees stirring (still in stainless steel barrels). Malolactic fermentation was neither encouraged nor inhibited, and the wine was bottled in June of 2020. Vegan.

12.2% ABV 44 cases produced

\$28 per bottle

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