

FORT ROSS

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW · SONOMA COAST

2011 RESERVE · CHARDONNAY · FORT ROSS VINEYARD

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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 31 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 55 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 growing cycle generally starts late in this cool, maritime climate but the 2011 spring was unusually cold and wet. The vineyard remained dormant until May when the days suddenly grew hot and the vines burst into action three months later than usual. In June, during bloom, the clusters were well positioned on the vines. Then, it rained once more resulting in far less cluster development than expected. During the cool summer the grapes did increase their pace to make up for lost time and miraculously developed vibrant flavors at far lower degrees Brix. Unexpected early fall rain, followed by thick fog, caused many vineyards to pick their crop before optimal ripeness. Finally most of the vineyard was picked at about 22° Brix which converts into wine of approximately 13% alcohol. We were fortunate that the wild Sonoma Coast gave us another unexpected gift - time to wait patiently before harvest.

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% used 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 small berried old 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 pale lemon hue is evidence of subtle stirring of the lees and bottling without fining or filtration. The decadent texture intertwined with electrifying acidity and stoney minerality expresses the high elevation and cool coastal climate. Aromas of Meyer lemon tart, stone fruits, and marzipan soar from the glass. As the wine touches the palate, the wine is delicate yet bright and expansive, with elements of wet stone and golden plum flavors wrap around the energetic, broad yet nervy core. The wine is elegant, with supple texture and a crisp, deep finish and is certain to evolve for years to come.

COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay
APPELLATION: Fort Ross-Seaview, Sonoma Coast
ESTATE GROWN: Fort Ross Vineyard
SELECTION: Hyde and Wente
AGING: 10 months in 100% French oak; 40% new
ALCOHOL: 13.0%
HARVESTED: October 2nd to October 4th, 2011
BOTTLED: August, 2012 - Unfined & Unfiltered
CASES PRODUCED: 45 cases 750 ml
WINEMAKER: Jeff Pisoni