

2014 VINTAGE NOTES

BY WINEMAKER MATT COURTNEY

2014 was our second full year of drought in the North Coast, and not surprisingly the growing season was dry and warm. Everything was early in 2014: dry soils and mild spring weather resulted in one of the earliest initiations of bud break we have seen in years. That trend continued throughout the season as we stayed several weeks ahead of average all the way through the onset of harvest in mid-August.

For the most part, these early seasons have been very good for wine quality. While we are exposed to a few more days of frost danger early on, we benefit at the end of the season by avoiding the threat of rainfall during harvest, which happens frequently in later ripening years.

Another benefit of a dry, early year is that berry size is kept in check. 2014 was characterized by small Pinot noir clusters containing many small, but highly flavorful berries. When we have these conditions in the vineyard, we get a two-fold concentrating effect: with small clusters, the vine's energy is concentrated into smaller than average amount of fruit; and with small berries, we get a higher skin to juice ratio which leads to more extraction of flavor, color and aroma.

The result of all of this is stunningly delicious wine. The 14s across the board show somewhat more concentration and silkiness than the 13s, and are generally characterized by explosive fruit, gorgeous deep color, and suppleness on the palate. While the 13s have a complexity driven by mineral and savory qualities, the 14s are equally complex with their layers of rich fruit balanced by tangy acidity and a touch of toasty oak.

2014 was truly one of the most outstanding vintages I have ever seen for wine quality - our third superb year in a row for Sonoma Pinot noir and Chardonnay. Each of these years has imprinted its own individual character on the wines, but if you enjoy deeply complex, flavorful, and aromatic wines, these 2014 Pinot noirs will quickly become some of the favorite bottles in your cellar.





2014 RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY CHARDONNAY

The 2014 Russian River Valley Chardonnay is a blend of our three Russian River Valley Chardonnay vineyards: El Diablo Vineyard on Eastside Road, Banfield Vineyard on Martinelli Road, and Ritchie Vineyard on Eastside Road. The wine is made with a modest amount of new oak to allow the fruit to take center stage. These appellation wines always offer great insight into the region as a whole for the given vintage. In the 2014 growing season, the Russian River Valley experienced beautiful, moderate weather with very few heat spikes or rain events. Thus, we have a wine with great richness and silkiness, yet still possessing firm structure. Notes of brioche, yellow peach, panna cotta, and white flowers greet the nose, while flavors of tangy limeade, pear nectar, lemon zest are buoyed by a savory and mouth-watering mix of acid and minerals on the finish.

Peak drinking window: 2016 through 2026



2014 BANFIELD VINEYARD CHARDONNAY,

The Chardonnay blocks in Banfield Vineyard are some of the coolest sites we work with. The vineyard sits in a protected pocket of the Russian River Valley that collects cool air in the mornings, and warms up slowly only when the morning sun peaks over the surrounding hills. Aromas of lime zest, orange blossom, wet granite, and baking spices emanate from the 2014 Banfield Vineyard Chardonnay. The wine is silky with great density and minerality on the mid-palate. Notes of pear skin, lime curd, and lemon butter unfold through the long finish.

Peak drinking window: 2017 through 2027



2014 RITCHIE VINEYARD CHARDONNAY



The 2014 Ritchie Vineyard Chardonnay is a rich, layered wine which showcases the quality of this Russian River Valley Grand Cru vineyard. On the nose, the wine displays aromas of wet granite, brioche, orange blossom, lemon oil, grilled pineapple, and baking spices. On the palate, the wine is silky and rich, with notes of pear nectar, lemon butter, mango, and panna cotta. The wine has an intensity that builds on the palate for several seconds, peaking with a stony mineral note. This Chardonnay has incredible density and length, with layers of flavors unfolding on the palate for a full minute.

Peak drinking window: 2017 through 2027

2014 U.V. EL DIABLO VINEYARD CHARDONNAY



The 2014 El Diablo Vineyard Chardonnay is made from grapes grown on the eastern banks of the Russian River by our esteemed vineyard manager, Ulises Valdez. Our two favorite clones of Chardonnay, "Montrachet" and "Old Wente", are planted in this vineyard and are blended together to create this wine. Notes of Meyer lemon, pine needle, orchard fruit, candied lemon peel, creme brûlée, and brioche marry with a savory, tangy acidity to form an intense, yet deftly balanced wine.

Peak drinking window: 2017 through 2027



2014 RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY PINOT NOIR

The 2014 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir is a beautifully pure expression of the 2014 growing season in the heart of Sonoma County. This cuvée was made with a modest amount of new oak influence to allow the character of the vintage to take center stage. On the nose, copious amounts of juicy blue and red fruits testify to the warm, dry growing season. Notes of gingerbread, pain grille, raspberry reduction, and wild strawberry follow suit. The palate boasts an exquisite purity of fruit centered on crushed cherries and fresh raspberries. Perfectly balanced on the palate, the wine is rich and long with just enough acid to pair with the soft, slightly chalky tannins for a pleasant, extended finish.

Peak drinking window: 2016 through 2026



2014 MENDOCINO RIDGE PINOT NOIR

The 2014 Mendocino Ridge Pinot noir is a dark and complex expression of this high elevation appellation on the border of Sonoma and Mendocino counties. The nose has an organic quality, with damp soil, toasted herbs, marinated cherries, and floral notes. The high elevation of this appellation reveals itself on the palate with flavors of fresh bing cherries, pomegranate, and fresh raspberries dominating. Tangy acidity combines with firm tannins to create a clean and focused finish.

Peak drinking window: 2016 through 2026



2014 WILLAMETTE VALLEY PINOT NOIR

The 2014 Willamette Valley Pinot noir is a bright and high-toned wine endowed with a brilliant, light ruby-red appearance. Distinctive floral notes on the nose are accompanied by delicate aromas of wild strawberry, baby powder, and wet granite. On the palate, the wine is lively and energetic with strawberry and sour cherry components run through by a vein of black truffle base notes and a dusty minerality. Firm tannins add structure to the medium-weight mid palate and persist into the finish.

Peak drinking window: 2016 through 2026.



2014 LONGBOW PINOT NOIR

As always, the 2014 Longbow Pinot noir is a barrel selection of our favorite barrels from the vintage in the Russian River Valley appellation. As in previous years, the 2014 Longbow is made with a very modest amount of new oak giving a truly transparent expression of the appellation from the growing season.

On the nose, aromas of crushed black cherries, cinnamon stick, and spiced cocoa mingle with a dusty/earthy note. On the palate, the wine is rich, silky, and fully ripe with tangy cherries, Red Hots, and black plum flavors that linger for a full minute. Pleasantly grippy yet polished tannins carry the lengthy finish.

Peak drinking window: 2016 through 2026



2014 FERRINGTON VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

The 2014 Ferrington Vineyard Pinot noir is dark and intense, both visually and on the palate. A nose of brambly wild berry, forest floor, cola, pencil shavings, and blackberry preserves is complemented by flavors of cranberry, black plum, pomegranate, and espresso. The mid-palate is silky and rich, leading into a long, layered finish. With time in the glass, secondary aromas of ground cinnamon, cedar, and griotte cherry begin to emerge. Pleasantly chewy tannins and tangy acidity provide the structure for this Pinot noir from one of the most historic vineyards in the famously cool Anderson Valley.

Peak drinking window: 2016 through 2026



2014 MONONI VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

The 2014 Mononi Vineyard Pinot noir is a wine with layers of gorgeous aromatics. A bouquet of forest floor, fresh roses, ripe wild cherry, and pencil shavings is present when the wine is first poured. On the palate, the wine leads with mouth-filling bright red cherry, which builds in intensity, and mellows into a broad smoke-tinged mid-palate. The wine unfolds dramatically in the glass, revealing layers of cola, roasted chestnuts, and black truffle bolstered by polished tannins for a long finish.

Peak drinking window: 2016 through 2026



2014 PERLI VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

The 2014 Perli Vineyard Pinot Noir boasts an exotic nose of burnt sugar, forrest floor, cassis, black plum, pine needle, and wild berry reduction. Savory, mouth-filling tannins and tangy acidity typical of this remote site on the Mendocino coast provide ample structure for flavors of black currant, graphite, tangy cherry, blue and black fruits, and asian spice. There is a coppery acidity and mineral-driven intensity on the palate which carries the minute-long finish.

Peak drinking window: 2017 through 2027



2014 TOBONI VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

The 2014 Toboni Vineyard Pinot noir exemplifies great Russian River Valley Pinot noir with a captivating mix of richness, earthiness, and purity of fruit. Notes of pine needle, sandalwood, dried flowers, and raspberry liqueur greet the nose. On the palate, a savory mineral quality pairs nicely with notes of raspberry preserves, white pepper, and huckleberry. With time in the glass, the wine reveals layers of complex flavors and aromas including espresso bean, kirsch, cinnamon, charred rib-eye, and fresh pastry. The finish is rich and mouth-filling, with blue and red fruits carried by chewy tannins.

Peak drinking window: 2016 through 2026



2014 U.V. LUCKY WELL VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

The 2014 UV Lucky Well Vineyard Pinot Noir is a vibrant expression of Pinot Noir from the ridge that separates the Sonoma Coast from the Russian River Valley. Not surprisingly, the wines from this ridge tend to have qualities of both regions: intense, bright, wild berry notes brought about by the cooling influence of the Pacific, and a broad, rich silkiness and complexity characteristic of the interior valley. This wine is no exception. Explosive wild berry, grilled meat, ripe strawberry, pine needle, raspberry liqueur, and black cherry notes adorn the nose of this tightly knit wine. The palate is intense, rich, and dense, and is balanced by tangy acidity and firm tannins. Flavors of fresh wild blackberries, cola, and spiced cherries mingle with a note of earth and crushed granite for a full minute on the finish.

Peak drinking window: 2017 through 2027



2014 HARPER'S REST ESTATE VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

The Harper's Rest Estate bottling always stands out as one of the flagship wines of our portfolio. The 2014 Harper's Rest Pinot noir is no exception. With a vibrant, dark garnet color, and bouquet of spiced cherries, puréed blackberries, black tea, and toasted French oak, this estate wine is a classic example of Russian River Valley richness, density, and finesse.

Harper's Rest is a two acre block planted on an ancient, gravelly, alluvial deposit on our Westside Road estate. This soil imbues the wine with a power, minerality, and concentration that is unparalleled in our line-up. While the wine is delicious right out of the bottle, it improves with air releasing notes of black plum, cola, and huckleberry, complimented by a savory, bay leaf quality. Tangy acidity and chewy, mouth-filling tannins carry the intensity for a minute-long finish.

Peak drinking window: 2017 through 2027



2014 TWO BIRDS ESTATE VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

The Two Birds Vineyard on our Westside Road estate is a three acre planting of three “heritage” clones of Pinot noir: Swan, Vosne-Romanée, and Pommard. These clones, planted on the well-draining, reddish-brown Sobrante soils, produce wines with very delicate and lifted aromatics of flowers and earth.

In the 2014 bottling, notes of fresh roses, turned earth, black tea, lavender, and crushed cherries mingle with subtle barrel notes of cedar and toasty oak. On the palate, the wine is expansive and silky, with black cherry, raspberry reduction, cola, and baking spices supported by a subtle acid backbone that keeps the wine fresh and lively. The exquisite balance of the 2014 Two Birds Pinot noir is a signature of the wines produced from our estate in the heart of the Russian River Valley, and allows the wine to fan out on the palate for a minute or more.

Peak drinking window: 2017 through 2027



2014 SMOKEY RIDGE VINEYARD ZINFANDEL

Layers of blackberry preserves, plum, black licorice, and blueberry pie filling combine with a grilled meat, savory quality to make the 2014 Smokey Ridge Vineyard Zinfandel a true powerhouse. On the palate, the incredible density and concentration is balanced by a lifted acidity, abundant yet polished tannins, and a graphite note that carries the plush and mouth-filling blue and black fruit. The hillside location of this vineyard, and the addition of a touch of Petite Sirah, are evident in the inky color and super-extracted fruit that persist on the palate for a full minute or more.

Peak drinking window: 2016 through 2026



2014 BANFIELD VINEYARD ZINFANDEL

The Banfield Vineyard Zinfandel is made from a small plot of ancient, dry farmed Zinfandel vines planted on a steep hillside in the Russian River Valley in 1880.

In 2014, the wine from this incredible vineyard is a textbook example of Russian River Valley Zinfandel at its best: a seamless combination of explosive fruit, bright acidity, and silky tannins. Aromas of crushed blackberry, raspberry, and cherry are joined by notes of cinnamon stick, tar, black pepper, and dried flowers. On the palate, the wine is dense but not heavy, clean and red-fruited, chewy and mouth-filling, with notes of wild strawberry, tart cherry, and dark chocolate persisting for a full minute.

Peak drinking window: 2016 through 2026



2014 FERRINGTON VINEYARD GEWÜRZTRAMINER



The 2014 Ferrington Vineyard Gewürztraminer has a pretty nose of fresh cut yellow peach, white flowers, and the varietally typical lychee. On the palate, the wine possesses great balance with a pleasant minerality, medium acidity, and a barely perceptible sweetness all in harmony with flavors of asian pear and peach nectar.

Drink now through 2020.

2014 VONARBURG REISLING



2014 is the first release of the Vonarburg Vineyard Riesling. This small vineyard in the Anderson Valley was planted for us by the same team that farms our Ferrington Vineyard fruit, and is finally bearing a commercial sized crop. This dry Riesling has a pretty nose of fresh cut melon, white pepper, and flinty minerality. On the palate, notes of stone fruit, white peach, and lime zest are lifted and carried by a firm, mouth-watering acidity through a clean and refreshing finish.

Drink 2015 through 2023.