

2020 VINTAGE NOTES

BY WINEMAKER MATT COURTNEY

2020 was a crazy year across the board, and the grape growing season in the Russian River Valley was no exception.

Fires notwithstanding, the season was glorious. The on-again off-again drought here on the west coast was back on after a relatively wet and cool 2018 and 2019, but conditions weren't severe. We had just enough water stress early in the season to limit crop size and keep berry size very small. This is a condition winemakers dream about since low crop size and small berry size typically leads to high concentrations of color, aroma, and flavor. Wines from this type of vintage are always exciting for their intensity and explosiveness.

Unfortunately, there was one flaw in this otherwise incredible growing season: a day in mid August when a heat spike combined with a lingering tropical storm. The lightning storm that resulted ignited hundreds of wildfires across the north coast. Fortunately for Arista, harvest was already well underway. As the fires grew in intensity and size over the coming days, we continued picking everything that was ready and had yet to be

The left side of the page features a vertical image of a wine bottle being poured into a glass. The wine is a deep red color and is captured mid-pour, creating a dynamic, flowing shape. The background is a warm, golden-brown color, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The Arista Winery logo, consisting of a yellow shield with a horizontal bar, is positioned above the brand name.

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affected by the spreading smoke. However, while most of the Chardonnay made it into the cellar unscathed, the majority of our Pinot Noir crop, which is slightly later ripening, was lost to the damage inflicted by wildfire smoke and was simply not harvested.



The good news is that the surviving grapes from 2020 made incredible wines as we had hoped. The Chardonnay is once again brilliant coming on the heels of the spectacular 2019 vintage. And the Pinot Noir is wonderfully detailed and precise. Quantities are extremely limited, but we can celebrate the scarce and beautiful wines that survived 2020 as the silver lining from a tempestuous year.

Cheers!

Matt Courtney



2020 RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY CHARDONNAY

An exceptional snapshot of the 2020 vintage in the Russian River, this release is a blend of barrels from five Russian River Valley sites: Flora Marie, El Diablo, Ritchie, Banfield, and our Westside Road Estate. With contributions from some of the finest Chardonnay vineyards in the appellation and made with slightly less new oak than our vineyard designates, this cuvée offers the highest level of early drinkability in our portfolio while maintaining an extraordinary degree of quality. Notes of lemon curd, candied oranges, and white flowers are joined by notes of baking spices and caramelized sugar. A touch of flinty reduction and a citrus inflected acid backbone keep the finish fresh and lively.

Peak drinking window: 2023 – 2028.



2020 PERLI VINEYARD CHARDONNAY

A rare departure from our Russian River Valley offerings, the Perli Vineyard Chardonnay from the Mendocino Ridge appellation is worth the detour. One of the racier wines in the Arista portfolio, Perli Vineyard Chardonnay is made from grapes grown on steep slopes above 1,000 feet within sight of the Pacific Ocean. Grilled yellow peach and saline minerality form the centerpiece of the palate. A rich and well-concentrated mid-palate is balanced by savory acidity driving a persistent, crystalline finish.

Peak drinking window: 2023 - 2030.



2020 RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY PINOT NOIR

The 2020 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir bottling is a wonderful introduction to the Arista portfolio. Wild cherry and blackberry notes assert themselves before candied strawberry and white pepper notes emerge. Translucent yet deeply colored, the wine has a pleasant richness and weight. The blend of Pinot Noir vineyards in this bottling perfectly balances ripe fruitiness and an underlying sweet character. Chewy tannins and well-integrated acidity carry the persistent finish, which is full of ripe red and blue fruit.

Peak drinking window: 2022 - 2027.



2020 FERRINGTON PINOT NOIR

The Ferrington Vineyard lies on a gently sloping bench overlooking the town of Boonville in the heart of Anderson Valley. One of the earliest sites to be planted in this historic appellation, Ferrington boasts some of the oldest Pinot Noir vines in the region. These old vines produce wines with wonderful complexity and effortless balance. The Anderson Valley in general, and Ferrington Vineyard in particular, is famous for marrying depth and density with electric acidity, and the 2020 Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir is a perfect example of this. Tangy blue fruit, tart cherry, elderberry, cranberry, and pomegranate notes emerge in harmony and evolve slowly in the glass. Notes of black pepper, struck match, and copper penny minerality add complexity to the long finish.

Peak drinking window: 2023 - 2035.



2020 MONONI PINOT NOIR

Mononi Vineyard is one of the original Russian River Valley properties that has been a part of our portfolio since Al and Janis McWilliams founded Arista in 2002. Planted in 1998, these mature vines produce a wine that is remarkable in its consistency from vintage to vintage. The 2020 Mononi Vineyard Pinot Noir shows notes of crisp, just-picked red fruits including fresh raspberry and wild cherry - two hallmarks of this single-vineyard cuvée. With time in the glass, the wine reveals more detail: vibrant kirsch-like aromatics, and a fragrant, earthy black truffle note. Like all of the 2020 Pinots from Arista, the color is a brilliant, translucent garnet. The palate is full of energy, with bright acidity balancing fine-grained tannins in a mouth-filling yet weightless experience.

Peak drinking window: 2022 - 2032.



2020 PERLI PINOT NOIR

Perched high above the Pacific Ocean on the Mendocino Coast at an elevation of 1,800 feet, the Perli Vineyard is easily the most visually spectacular site that we harvest. The steep, 60% slopes face south and provide expansive views of the Sonoma Coast. Its proximity to the famous vineyards that dot the ridgetops just over the county line is immediately evident on the glass: The exotic notes of forest floor, blue fruits, and wild berries in the 2020 Perli Vineyard Pinot Noir are hallmarks of these coastal vineyards; yet its firm tannins and crisp acidity speak to the slightly cooler climate of this more northerly, high-elevation site. Pine needle, tart red plum, and just ripe blueberry combine to form a super fresh bouquet.

Peak drinking window: 2023 - 2035.



2021 VONARBURG VINEYARD RIESLING



As has been our preference in recent years, the 2021 Vonarburg Vineyard Riesling was made in the traditional style of the Mosel region in Germany. The electric, mouthwatering acidity supports vibrant flavors of jellied quince, Golden Delicious apple, lime, and grapefruit. A kiss of wet stone minerality keeps the finish firm and fresh and provides a counterpoint to the luscious and juicy mouthfeel. The balance of this year's edition is superb. The 2021's lower alcohol and high acidity counterbalanced by a natural residual sweetness.

Peak drinking window: 2023 through 2033

2021 ROSÉ OF PINOT NOIR



This rosé is brilliantly clear with a beautiful rose gold hue reminiscent of rosé Champagne. Rose water, fresh melon, and strawberry agua fresca come to mind with the first sip of the 2021 Arista Rosé of Pinot Noir. Super light and incredibly refreshing, this exquisite rosé is the ultimate warm weather aperitif. A citrusy tang adds a mouth-watering brightness to the palate. A perfect summer wine.