



ARISTA

2014 RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY PINOT NOIR

Sonoma County

VINTAGE NOTES

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 budbreak we've 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.

A 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. With small berries, we get a higher skin-to-juice ratio which leads to more extraction of flavor, color and aroma.

WINEMAKING

Cold grapes arrive at the winery early in the morning after having been picked at night. The clusters are sorted by hand and then destemmed into small, open-top fermenters. The juice is allowed to warm gradually and naturally in the fermenter. Given that all of the wines are made with native yeasts and are not inoculated, this cold-soak period can vary between five and eight days depending on how long it takes these native populations to build up and begin fermentation.

A typical Pinot Noir fermentation for us lasts 10 to 14 days. The wines will then spend the next 11 months in barrel. We use 60-gallon Burgundy-shaped French oak barrels exclusively for élevage. Roughly 70 percent of these are François Frères, with the balance being a mix of Chassin, Cavin, Sirugue and Remond. The new oak component ranges from roughly 30 percent for the appellation wines to between 40 percent and 60 percent for the vineyard designates. The wines always go all the way through malolactic.

TASTING NOTES

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.



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