

DONUM

The Gift of the Land

West Slope comes from the middle portion of our west-sloping 4-90 vineyard block, a 5.5-acre site at the Donum Ranch. The Donum Roederer Selection has always been the mainstay of our Donum Carneros Pinot Noir. Beginning in 2007, as the vines developed further depth and complexity with age, this block seemed to cry out to be bottled as a stand-alone, and the West Slope bottling was born. The West Slope truly represents the culmination of our search for the top Pinot Noir terroirs in Carneros. After the tough decision not to bottle a West Slope in the difficult 2011 vintage, it brings us great joy to see this wine return in stunning fashion in 2012.

FRUIT: 100% Donum Clone,
single vineyard block

NEW OAK: 75% new French oak
(Francois Frères, Gamba)

HARVEST DATE: October 5 & 8, 2012

ALCOHOL: 14.7%

BOTTLING DATE: February 5, 2014

PH: 3.80

CASES PRODUCED: 273 cases

TA: 6.1 g/L

FERMENTATION DETAILS

We picked our 490 block in two passes in 2012, one on October 5 and one on October 8. Although three days may not sound like much, it makes a subtle difference, and this allows us more flexibility in blending the final wine. Both lots are treated fairly similarly, with long cold-soaks, punchdowns during fermentation, and typically a period of extended maceration. Because we allow fermentation to happen spontaneously using native yeast, sometimes the yeast work on their own schedule, and this was the case in 2012, with fermentation taking longer than usual (nearly four weeks) to finish completely. Once the wine was dry, we drained the free run to a mix of new and used French oak.

BLENDING DETAILS

The wine completed malolactic fermentation in barrel, and was left to age for a year. In December and January of 2013/14 we began tasting through the barrels to find the best possible blend. Ultimately we decided on a blend featuring four barrels of the first pass through the vineyard, which provides lift and elegance, and eight barrels from the second pass, which provides structure and body. The final blend was assembled and bottled in February 2014.

WEATHER ATTRIBUTES

The season unfolded event-free, with normal budbreak, and good winter rains to fill the soil profile, giving us the resources for a promising season. Strong and even shoot growth is one of the benchmarks for a good season. Flowering occurred late in May, which is very normal, indicating we would pick in late September. Temperatures at flowering were mild, leading to a healthy fruit set. Most of the summer months continued with mild weather, allowing for less stress on the vines and causing a slightly larger berry size than normal, which is one of the reasons 2012 was so bountiful.

The season continued quite perfectly for us growers, with no untimely weather occurrences; overall it was a mild to cooler season. September saw a few days of heat, which helped to push harvest into gear. And happily, harvest continued over the course of weeks, allowing us to focus on each of our vineyards, and blocks, picking them at peak maturity. After the stress of 2011 this was a wonderful gift. All our fruit was harvested before the first Fall rains visited the valley in mid-October.

2012 CARNEROS WEST SLOPE PINOT NOIR

Our 2012 West Slope is vivid ruby in color, with aromas of Bing cherry, raspberry, fresh cream, and wildflowers. The palate shows cherry as well, with darker berry, briar and spice flavors joining in. There is even a surprising note of stone fruit, perhaps peach or apricot. Lively and intense, layers of complexity reveal themselves as this young wine opens up in the glass, and firm tannin carries through the finish.

-Dan Fishman, winemaker

