

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 Selection has always been the mainstay clone 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.

The 2016 West Slope is perhaps even more hedonistic than usual, with intense aromas of cherry, blueberry, kirsch, vanilla, and a hint of tobacco. The palate is juicy yet serious, with exuberant black fruit and pomegranate tamed by notes of baking spice, vanilla, and sous-bois. Silky tannin and good acidity carry the dark fruit flavors on and on through the remarkably long finish.

FRUIT: 100% Donum Clone,
single vineyard block

HARVEST DATE: September 26 & 27, 2016

BOTTLING DATE: January 30, 2018

CASE PRODUCTION: 240 cases

NEW OAK: 85% new French oak
(Francois Freres, Cadus)

ALCOHOL: 14.7%

PH: 3.84

TA: 5.9 g/L

FERMENTATION & AGING DETAILS

As with the rest of the 2016 harvest, our West Slope block was picked earlier than usual, marking one of the rare times of late that it has been picked in September. We harvested in two passes, with the fruit fermented separately. After a long cold-soak, fermentation proceeded rapidly, which allowed for a nearly ten-day-long period of extended maceration, which can allow for complex, silky tannins to develop. Once we determined we had extracted as much as we wanted to the wine was barreled down to a combination of new and used French oak. After a year in barrel we selected only the top barrels for the West Slope bottling, which was blended and bottled in January, 2018.

WEATHER ATTRIBUTES

The 2016 vintage was eerily reminiscent of 2014 and 2015; in fact, looking at a graph of growing degree days, 2016 is almost an exact replica of 2014. Thus, it was no surprise that bud-break was early for the third successive vintage, in some cases starting in early February, but certainly well underway by mid-March. This naturally results in an earlier harvest, and we once again began picking Pinot Noir in August and finished by the first week of October. However, looking merely at temperatures can be deceiving, as factors such as rainfall, diurnal temperature swings, and the timing and duration of heat spikes can greatly affect the development of the vines. While 2016 was the last of five straight drought years, we did receive average or slightly above average rain during the winter of 2015/16, so the soils were saturated, and water was not an issue, allowing for even vegetative growth.

The 2016 season was characterized by three heat waves in September, which makes for tricky picking decisions, as fruit that is just on the cusp of ripeness can quickly jump to over-ripeness during prolonged heat. We were fortunate that the timing of the heat was not problematic for our vineyards, and we picked ripe fruit just before each heatwave, leading to a harvest with three peaks of harvesting. The 2016 vintage was the fifth in a row with excellent growing conditions, a remarkable string of good fortune.

2016
CARNEROS
WEST SLOPE
PINOT NOIR

