

DONUM

The Gift of the Land

West Slope comes from our west-sloping 4-90 vineyard block at the Donum Ranch. The Roederer selection there has always been the mainstay of our Donum Carneros Pinot Noir. In most vintages, the wine seemed more complex when blended with a small portion of old Martini selection. But in 2002 and 2003, we felt the 4-90 was already complete, and that the Martini component was like a dollop of whipped cream that sat on top rather than marrying. In 2007, we heard the site singing a solo again, not a duet. And so we made a barrel selection from the block into a stellar stand-alone wine -- West Slope.

FRUIT: 100% Roederer selection

HARVEST DATE: October 3, 2007

BOTTLING DATE: February 12, 2009

CASES PRODUCED: 150

BARREL AGING: 16 months

NEW OAK: 100% French oak, 70% new.

Coopers are François Frères, Billon, Ermitage

ALCOHOL: 14.4%

PH: 3.72

TA: 0.59g/100ml

FERMENTATION DETAILS

This block was hand-harvested and sorted in the vineyard and at the winery. The lot was destemmed and underwent a saignée of 10%. The must was cold soaked before fermentation. An extractive yeast strain provided great concentration of flavors and tannins while allowing ripe fruit aromas and subtle nuances of the Roederer selection to ring true. During fermentation, the wine was pumped over the cap before 20° Brix, then the cap was punched down four times daily until 5° Brix. Fermentation was ended with pump-overs to allow the yeast to "breathe." After finishing fermentation, the wine was held for ten days of extended maceration, then sent to barrel on its lees. The wine was a best barrel selection of free run juice lots only. It was bottled without fining or filtration.

WEATHER ATTRIBUTES

It is a pleasure to write about the 2007 vintage as there are few years that seem so perfect or give us such great results. 2007 was one of those benchmark years that shows the true potential of each block. Our best blocks did not improve as much as the lesser blocks because year in year out they deliver the best fruit without much intervention, which is the sign of a true great site. Our lesser blocks shone as climate, crop load and ripening all fell into place, giving us overall stellar quality.

2007 was a drier than normal year, with good winter chill and a nice even bud-break in late February. The rains stopped early but the soils reached almost full point which got us off to a good start. A fairly cool April slowed down growth making good use of the soil moisture. May was more temperamental, hot early days pushed bloom into gear, then cool, then hot again causing shatter and giving us loose clusters and small berries. These are good quality indicators because a loose cluster stays free of rot and small berries give us a larger skin to juice ratio, resulting in more intense wines as pigments, tannins and flavors are in the skins.

The summer continued smoothly with only one heat spike in July, otherwise a cool, moderate summer. The next big event happened around late August / early September as temperatures climbed into the 90's. Depending on the brix / sugar level of your fruit this can mean the start of harvest. That is our California dilemma! Most of our blocks were around 21 brix giving us the chance to let this heat pass; the following weeks were ideal rewarding us with beautiful ripening weather. We picked over a period of almost six weeks, concentrating on each block as it reached perfect ripeness. This was a long harvest period as all of our fruit comes from our estate vineyard in Carneros or the Russian River appellation. In 2007 picking occurred around clones not sites, starting with the Dijons, followed by Martini, Swan and Hanzell and finishing with our Donum selection and Calera. -Anne Moller Racke, *winegrower*

2007 WEST SLOPE CARNEROS PINOT NOIR

Vibrant, racy aromas of ripe raspberry, strawberry and rose petal and hints of spice, earth and smoke fill the nose of this Pinot Noir. Silky and supple, the wine shows succulent fruit flavors of strawberry, plum and wild berry with suggestions of brown spice and perfectly integrated oak on an enduring finish.

-Kenneth Juhasz, *winemaker*

