

DONUM

The Gift of the Land

The Donum Ranch covers the slopes of three hills in the Carneros region just north of San Pablo Bay. Nestled amid these hills is a 50-acre vineyard, planted to a diverse collection of Dijon clones and heirloom selections of Pinot Noir. Our Carneros Estate Grown Pinot Noir not only comes from the best blocks in our vineyard – our grand cru sites – but also is a selection of the most appealing barrels within each lot. For the first time in 2015, the Donum Carneros Pinot Noir included fruit from our newest vineyard blocks at the front of the property as you drive in. Despite their young age, these vines are already showing exceptional quality, and over the coming years we expect to add even more fruit from these blocks to the Estate blend.

The 2016 Carneros Estate opens with a note of sassafras and salty air that seems to be the signature of our terroir, which is joined by aromas of Bing cherry, fresh red currant, raspberry, pomegranate, and subtle notes of marzipan and rosemary. Juicy black cherry, berry, and plum aromas dominate the palate, with subtle dried herb notes. While still tight at this young age, there is massive concentration and depth, with structure and a surprising delicacy that suggests the wine has a long life ahead of it.

FRUIT: 35% Pommard, 25% Donum Selection, 22% Dijon 667, and 18% Calera

NEW OAK: 62% new French oak (Francois Freres, Remond, Cadus, Gamba, Quintessence, Atelier)

HARVEST DATE: August 29 – October 1, 2016

ALCOHOL: 14.5%

BOTTLING DATE: January 31, 2018

PH: 3.79

CASE PRODUCTION: 1224 cases

TA: 6.0 g/L

FERMENTATION & AGING DETAILS

After first working with our new estate blocks in 2015, we knew what to expect in 2016: basically, a harvest in two parts, with the young vines coming in very early, and the old vines coming in very late. Each lot is treated individually, but in general terms there is a cold soak lasting from three to eight days, followed by primary fermentation lasting up to two weeks, and then occasionally a period of extended maceration on the skins. The wine is then transferred to new and used French oak barrels, where it will undergo malolactic fermentation and aging. After the wine has aged a year, we go through the barrels and select only those that meet our quality standard and work together in a blend. We are especially stringent with the young vine blocks, where sometimes as little as 25-50% of the barrels will make the cut. Once we have decided on the best blend, the barrels are assembled in tank for bottling.

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
ESTATE GROWN
PINOT NOIR

