

DONUM

The Gift of the Land

In 2015 we decided to graft part of our Russian River estate vineyard to different clones of pinot noir and chardonnay. The advantage of grafting is that it allows us to bring some new plant diversity to the vineyard, while at same time keeping of the existing root system, which is the main reason that older vines produce deeper, more complex wines. One of the clones that we planted is the Calera selection, which has been one of our favorites on our Carneros ranch. This decision was immediately rewarded, as from the very first vintage it has been clear that this clone performs exceedingly well on our Russian River site. The Heritage Clones Pinot Noir is a selection of the top barrels from this block.

Our first vintage of Russian River Heritage Clones is a blockbuster. The nose is dark and intense, with aromas of blueberry, black cherry, cacao, vanilla and a hint of anise. The palate shows a core of dark fruit, with black cherry, raspberry, and mulberry, along with secondary notes of tobacco leaf, vanilla cream, and clove. Somehow dark and fresh at the same time, the finish combines mouth-filling tannin with a silky texture, and leaves a lingering mineral impression.

FRUIT: 100% Calera clone from the Winside Vineyard

HARVEST DATE: September 5, 2016

BOTTLING DATE: January 30, 2018

CASE PRODUCTION: 110 cases

NEW OAK: 60% new French oak (Remond, Francois Freres, Gamba)

ALCOHOL: 14.6%

PH: 3.55

TA: 6.6 g/L

FERMENTATION & AGING DETAILS

Although our instincts told us that the Calera clone would do well on our Russian River vineyard, it was until the fruit was in the door that we began to realize just how well. From the sorting line on, this fruit stood out for exceptional depth and purity. After a cold-soak lasting eight days, fermentation began spontaneously and proceeded smoothly, with punchdowns several times daily to break up the cap. We allowed the fermentation to finish on the skins, and then transferred the wine to French oak barrels for secondary fermentation and ageing. We then selected the best barrels from the lot to bottle as the Heritage Clones blend.

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
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY
HERITAGE CLONES
PINOT NOIR

