

DRAGONETTE CELLARS



2009 PINOT NOIR, FIDDLESTIX VINEYARD, STA. RITA HILLS



100% PINOT NOIR

VINEYARDS:

FIDDLESTIX - 100%

CLONES:

113 & 115

YIELD (TONS PER ACRE):

2.43

HARVEST DATES:

SEPTEMBER 28TH AND OCT 2ND

APPELLATION:

STA. RITA HILLS

FERMENTATION:

1.5 TON OPEN TOP FERMENTERS

4 DAY COLD SOAK

NATIVE AND COMMERCIAL YEASTS

COOPERAGE

100% FRENCH OAK, 33% NEW

AGING:

18 MONTHS ON THE LEES

BOTTLED:

APRIL 14, 2011

ALCOHOL: 14.6%

CASES PRODUCED: 175

SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$48

PHILOSOPHY:

WE BELIEVE THAT PINOT NOIR, PERHAPS MORE THAN ANY OTHER WINE, REQUIRES METICULOUS WORK IN THE VINEYARD AND MINIMAL HANDLING IN THE CELLAR; WINEMAKING MANIPULATION WILL BE EVIDENT IN THE FINISHED WINE. THUS, WE FEEL IT CRUCIAL TO BE PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THE VINEYARDS THROUGHOUT THE SEASON, FROM MANAGING THE CANOPY, DROPPING EXCESS AND/OR UNEVEN FRUIT, AND TASTING FOR BOTH SUGAR AND ACID CONTENT AND PHENOLIC RIPENESS PRIOR TO HARVEST. ONCE THE GRAPES ARE IN, THEY NEED TO BE GENTLY HANDLED AND CAREFULLY WATCHED TO ENSURE THEIR POTENTIAL IS REALIZED.

THE VINEYARD:

FIDDLESTIX IS A RENOWNED VINEYARD AT THE WESTERN EDGE OF THE STA. RITA HILLS APPELLATION, EXPERTLY FARMED BY KATHY JOSEPH AND COASTAL VINEYARD CARE. THE EARLY MORNING FOG AND COOL AFTERNOON BREEZES PROVIDE THE PERFECT CLIMATE FOR RIPENING THE FICKLE PINOT NOIR. FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, WE HAVE SELECTED TWO BLOCKS WHICH HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY LOW-YIELDING AND WHICH HAVE PRODUCED REMARKABLY EXPRESSIVE GRAPES. THE 113 GIVES PRETTY, SPICY WINES BURSTING WITH RED FRUITS, ESPECIALLY RASPBERRY. THE 115 PRODUCES LARGER-BODIED, MORE STRUCTURED DARK CHERRY FRUITED WINES.

THE VINTAGE:

2009 WAS A CLASSIC COOL-CLIMATE YEAR, UNTIL A DRAMATIC LATE AUGUST HEAT WAVE ARRIVED, DRIVING UP SUGARS AND CAUSING SUNBURN IN OVER-EXPOSED BLOCKS. CAREFUL CANOPY MANAGEMENT AND PROPER YIELDS WERE CRUCIAL; OVER EXPOSED FRUIT WAS TORCHED, WHILE OVER CROPPED FRUIT LACKED SUFFICIENT PHENOLIC RIPENESS TO BE HARVESTED WHEN SUGAR LEVELS WERE WITHIN A REASONABLE RANGE. AFTER THE HEAT WAVE (AND A SMALL RAINSTORM), NORMAL HARVEST CONDITIONS RETURNED, PERMITTING WELL-TENDED FRUIT TO MARCH SLOWLY TOWARD OPTIMUM RIPENESS (WITH SUFFICIENT ACIDITY).

OUR WINEMAKING:

THE GRAPES FOR THIS WINE WERE HARVESTED IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS, AND WE PERSONALLY HAND-SORTED THE CLUSTERS IN THE VINEYARD TO REMOVE UNRIPE OR DAMAGED CLUSTERS AND LEAVES. THE GRAPES WERE PROCESSED WITHIN TWO HOURS OF HARVEST AS FOLLOWS: 70% OF THE FRUIT WAS DESTEMMED WITHOUT CRUSHING AND 30% OF THE FRUIT REMAINED WHOLE CLUSTER. THE GRAPES WERE PLACED IN FERMENTERS AND COLD SOAKED FOR 4 DAYS BEFORE FERMENTATION WAS ALLOWED TO COMMENCE WITH NATIVE YEASTS. FERMENTATION LASTED 14 -18 DAYS. AT DRYNESS, THE FREE RUN JUICE WAS DRAINED DIRECTLY TO BARREL AND THE REMAINING BERRIES WERE PRESSED IN A SMALL BASKET PRESS AND BARRELED SEPARATELY. THE WINE WAS AGED IN FRENCH OAK BARRELS, 33% NEW, FOR 18 MONTHS WITHOUT RACKING AND WAS BOTTLED UNFINED AND UNFILTERED.

PROPRIETORS/WINEMAKERS:

JOHN DRAGONETTE, STEVE DRAGONETTE, & BRANDON SPARKS-GILLIS