

DRAGONETTE CELLARS



2009 PINOT NOIR, HILLIARD-BRUCE VINEYARD, STA. RITA HILLS



100% PINOT NOIR

VINEYARDS:

HILLIARD BRUCE - 100%

CLONES:

777 & 115

YIELD (TONS PER ACRE):

2.06

HARVEST DATE:

OCTOBER 12TH

APPELLATION:

STA. RITA HILLS

FERMENTATION:

1.5 TON OPEN TOP FERMENTERS

7 DAY COLD SOAK

NATIVE AND COMMERCIAL YEASTS

COOPERAGE

100% FRENCH OAK, 25% NEW

AGING:

15 MONTHS

BOTTLED:

JANUARY 21, 2010

ALCOHOL: 14.6%

CASES PRODUCED: 100

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:

HILLIARD BRUCE IS A FANTASTIC NEW PINOT NOIR PROJECT AT THE FAR WESTERN EDGE OF THE SANTA RITA HILLS APPELLATION. THE GRAPES ARE EXPERTLY FARMED IN A "NO EXPENSE SPARED" MANNER AND DESTINED ONLY FOR THEIR SOON-TO-BE-ANNOUNCED ESTATE LABEL AND SUPER-SERIOUS WINERIES LIKE OURSELVES. OUR BLOCKS CONSISTED OF CLONES 115 AND 777 FROM STEEPLY SLOPED HILLSIDES WITH WELL-DRAINED SANDY SOILS. THE EARLY MORNING FOG AND COOL AFTERNOON BREEZES PROVIDE THE PERFECT CLIMATE FOR RIPENING THE FICKLE PINOT NOIR.

THE VINTAGE:

2009 WAS A CLASSIC COOL-CLIMATE YEAR, UNTIL A DRAMATIC LATE AUGUST HEAT WAVE CAME ALONG, DRIVING UP SUGARS AND CAUSING SUNBURN IN OVER- EXPOSED BLOCKS. CAREFUL CANOPY MANAGEMENT AND PROPER YIELDS WERE CRUCIAL IN 2009, AS 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 TO REMOVE UNRIPE OR DAMAGED CLUSTERS AND LEAVES. THE GRAPES WERE DELIVERED TO THE WINERY AND IMMEDIATELY DESTEMMED (WITHOUT CRUSHING) AND PLACED DIRECTLY INTO 1.5 TON OPEN TOP FERMENTERS. WE COLD SOAKED THE GRAPES FOR 7 DAYS BEFORE PERMITTING FERMENTATION TO COMMENCE WITH NATIVE YEASTS (LATER ASSISTED WITH COMMERCIAL YEASTS) AND TEMPERATURE CONTROL. FERMENTATION LASTED 14 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, 25% NEW, FOR 15 MONTHS AND WAS BOTTLED UNFINED AND UNFILTERED. THESE WERE SOME OF OUR FAVORITE BARRELS IN THE CELLAR, MATCHING DEEP BLUE AND BLACK FRUIT FLAVORS WITH ULTRA-FINE TEXTURE AND RIPE ROUND TANNINS FOR A LONG SMOOTH FINISH.

PROPRIETORS/WINEMAKERS:

JOHN DRAGONETTE, STEVE DRAGONETTE, & BRANDON SPARKS-GILLIS

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