

DRAGONETTE



2023 PINOT NOIR, SANFORD & BENEDICT VINEYARD, STA. RITA HILLS



100% PINOT NOIR

APPELLATION

Sta. Rita Hills

CLONES

"Heritage" selection (Martini via Martin Ray), 667

VITICULTURE (OUR BLOCKS)

Organic Practices (Not Certified)

HARVEST DATES

September 28, October 5, 11

YIELD (TONS PER ACRE)

2.71-3.79 TPA

Average: 2.87

FERMENTATION

1.4 Ton open top fermenters

100% Destemmed

2 - 3 day cold soak

Native yeasts & MLF

COOPERAGE

100% French Oak (30% new)

AGING

17 months on the lees

BOTTLED

March 6, 2025

ALCOHOL: 13.9%

CASES PRODUCED: 300

SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$85

PHILOSOPHY

We seek to identify exceptional vineyard sites and farming partners in order to source and grow the finest fruit in Santa Barbara. Vineyard blocks are individually managed for appropriate canopy, proper yield, and ideal pick date. We then shepherd this fruit into wine with our own hands. Wines are barreled and aged on their lees until they reach their full potential. The goal is wines of complexity, balance, and textual purity that are also true to both vintage and place.

We bottle single vineyard wines when the wines express a unique character or sense of "place" and yet are complete wines of balance, harmony and interest.

THE VINEYARD

Historic Sanford & Benedict is the original Pinot Noir vineyard (est. 1971) in the Santa Ynez Valley (Sta. Rita Hills was not established until 2001), and it has been the inspiration for winemakers for ever since. Originally planted to a selection of apparently secret "heritage" clones (subsequently expanded and replanted over the years), this magical site simply buzzes with cosmic energy. We purchase fruit here from two distinct blocks of older vines (1999) and oldest vines (1972), buying by the acre so we may employ specialized organic farming practices. These stately vines stand tall on their enormous trunks, while still producing a solid crop of beautifully concentrated grapes. The resulting wines display sappy red and black cherry fruits with old-vine style and grace.

THE VINTAGE

2023 was an excellent vintage, a product of good rainfall, a cool spring, and occasional short periods of moderate heat in the summer before an ideal September allowed measured, even ripening. A wet winter cleansed and supercharged the soil with moisture for the growing season, and canopies grew strong. May and June were generally cool, and flowering was extended, but set was solid across grape varieties. July turned warm (but not hot), which accelerated growth nicely. August turned cooler with occasional warm periods (August 5-7, 15-16 & 28-30). Hurricane Hilary (which swamped the desert southwest from August 16-20) only brought high humidity to the Central Coast. September turned cool, and Labor Day itself was the coolest in years, thankfully. The rest of September and October were essentially mild, and Pinot Noir grapes slowly ripened until they could be picked deliberately on cool foggy mornings from early to mid-October.

OUR WINEMAKING

We harvest each individual lot in the cold early morning hours with hand sorting in the field by the owners. We process the fruit within hours; the grapes are mostly destemmed without crushing. We cold soak the grapes for 2 to 3 days, then ferment the juice with native yeasts, using a mixture of pumpovers and punchdowns for extraction. At dryness, free run juice is drained to barrel, and the berries gently pressed separately. The wine is aged on its lees for 17 months before bottling without fining or filtration.

PROPRIETORS/WINEMAKERS

John Dragonette, Steve Dragonette, & Brandon Sparks-Gillis

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