



WINEMAKER: Ken Brown

VINEYARD SOURCE: Clos Pepe Vineyard, Santa Rita Hills. This family-run estate is a small jewel in the highly regarded Santa Rita Hills appellation with only 28 acres of vines (24 of which are planted to Pinot Noir). The vineyard is farmed with meticulous attention to detail, year-round hand labor and sustainable agriculture methods. The soils are low-vigor, sandy loam and are rich in calcareous shale. The block sourced for Ken Brown Pinot Noir is planted to the Pommard clone.

VINTAGE: The 2007 growing season began with a dry winter—rainfall totals were among the lowest in more than 50 years. Very cold temperatures in January combined with a cool spring caused delays in vine development, pushing the growing cycle 2 to 3 weeks behind average. Clusters were small and loose with very small berries. This allowed more sunlight penetration for superb development of color, flavor and aromatics. Small berries and fewer clusters also translated into lower yields per acre. Crop size was down about 30%. Pinot Noir from the Clos Pepe Vineyard was harvested in three distinct lots on October 2, 3 and 4.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS: Pinot Noir clusters were hand sorted before being destemmed and gravity fed to fermenters. The must was immediately chilled for a pre-fermentation cold soak where the most beneficial extraction of color, aroma and flavor occurs. During fermentation, concentration was enhanced by periodic gentle punch-downs of the cap. As soon as the wine reached dryness, it was pressed and transferred to 60-gallon French oak barrels where it aged for 19 months. About 40% of the barrels were new French oak.

This is one of the most classic Clos Pepe Pinot Noirs we have made to date, with an expression that is truly reflective of the vineyard. The nose features a characteristic touch of minerality with underlying fruit components, including wild blackberry, black raspberry and a hint of cranberry. The flavors, including dark berry and spice, are supported by a silky mid-palate, which culminates in a long, elegant finish. The wine beautifully balances a rich texture with bright acidity and a velvety tannin structure. These components will continue to harmonize with additional cellaring, enhancing the depth, complexity and longevity of this classic Pinot Noir.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 6.30 g/l

pH: 3.54

Alcohol: 14.7%

Production: 315 cases