



WINEMAKER: Ken Brown

VINEYARD SOURCES: Rio Vista (53%), Clos Pepe (24%) and Sanford & Benedict (23%). This Pinot Noir sources grapes from three of Santa Rita Hill's most prestigious vineyards. Rio Vista Vineyard is located at the eastern end of the appellation where slightly warmer temperatures result in a rich texture, smooth tannins and dark cherry flavors in the wine. Situated further west in the Santa Rita Hills appellation, Sanford & Benedict and Clos Pepe Vineyards enjoy somewhat cooler temperatures, which promotes complexity and black fruit components in the wine.

VINTAGE: The 2007 growing season began with a dry winter—rainfall totals were among the lowest in over 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%. Fruit from Rio Vista Vineyard was harvested on September 27. Grapes from Clos Pepe Vineyard were picked on October 4, while fruit from Sanford & Benedict came in on October 8.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS: Pinot Noir clusters were destemmed, then immediately chilled for a pre-fermentation cold soak where the most beneficial extraction of color, aroma and flavor occurs. During fermentation, extraction was enhanced by gently punching down the cap twice a day. The wine aged 17 months in French oak barrels, including 35% new French oak.

This wine is a classic expression of Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir, a fusion of the diversity of the appellation. Richly extracted aromas of dark cherry, blackberry and black raspberry are accented by a touch of toasted almond and a gentle spice note imparted by French oak. On the palate, flavors of Bing cherries and subtle earth tones give way to a rich, dense mouthfeel, luxurious tannins and a silky finish. The wine's richness allows for excellent drinkability upon release, while its structure ensures great cellar potential.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 5.9 g/l

pH: 3.56

Alcohol: 14.7%