



VINEYARD SOURCE: *100% Rancho La Viña Vineyard (Santa Rita Hills)* This remarkable new vineyard is located at the far western edge on the south side of the Sta. Rita Hills appellation. The 17-acre site was planted in 2005 on a gently sloped mesa, which is several hundred feet above the valley floor. The vines are fully exposed to the cool winds coming off the Pacific Ocean, making it one of the coldest Pinot Noir plantings in California. The wines have shown profound color and Pinot Noir fruit intensity that will surely make this property one of the most noteworthy Pinot Noir vineyards in the new world.

VINTAGE: 2008 was a standout vintage, especially for Pinot Noir. Yields were below normal due in part to a freeze in January and a frost in April that affected new growth and young clusters. In addition, rainfall totals for the 2008 season were below average for the second year in a row. Lower yields equated to superb concentration and richness in the wines. Weather patterns during the harvest period could not have been better. Warm, sunny days alternated with cooler, foggy days, promoting slow, even ripening of the grapes and allowing us to select the ideal time to pick. Grapes from Rancho La Viña were harvested on October 15.

WINEMAKING: Pinot Noir clusters from Rancho La Viña Vineyard were hand sorted before being de-stemmed and 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 gently punching down the cap. As soon as the wine reached dryness, it was pressed and transferred to 60-gallon French oak barrels where it aged for 18 months. About 43% of the barrels were new French oak.

TASTING NOTES: This debut bottling from Rancho La Viña displays an extraordinarily deep garnet color, a testament to the small berries of this low vigor site. Aromas of wild blackberry and blueberry are accented by hints of truffle, black pepper and a defining minerality that has become the trademark of Pinot Noirs from the cooler end of Sta. Rita Hills. The flavors mirror the aromatics and are enveloped in a rich, round texture with nicely integrated tannins and a long, lingering finish. The wine will continue to grow in complexity with additional cellaring.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 6.3 g/l

pH: 3.59

Alcohol: 14.5%

Production: 90 cases