



VINEYARD SOURCES: 50% *Clos Pepe Vineyard*, 40% *Rio Vista Vineyard*, 10% *Rancho La Viña*. This Pinot Noir sources grapes from three top Sta. Rita Hills vineyards. Clos Pepe, a small, family-run estate located in the northern reaches of the appellation, is known for its meticulous vineyard practices and rich, dark fruit in its wines. 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. Rancho La Viña is situated at the western edge of the Sta. Rita Hills in close proximity to the Pacific Ocean, and enjoys cool, breezy conditions, which promotes deep color, intense fruit expression and complexity in the wine.

VINTAGE: The 2009 vintage began with cool temperatures in spring and early summer, but by late August, a series of warm days arrived, jumpstarting the harvest earlier than expected. Warm days alternated with cooler days, a pattern that allowed the grapes to fully develop with ideal color and character. After two years of exceptionally low crop yields, this year's harvest was back to more normal levels, averaging 2.5 tons per acre. For the third year in a row, rainfall totals were below average, which helped control vine vigor, producing superb concentration and flavors in the grapes. Fruit for this blend was harvested in early October.

WINEMAKING: Pinot Noir clusters for this wine were hand sorted before being de-stemmed 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 gently punching down the cap several times per day. The wine aged 18 months in French oak barrels with 37% new French oak and was bottled on May 6, 2011.

TASTING NOTES: This wine provides an excellent overview of the Sta. Rita Hills, combining Pinot Noir from all corners of the appellation. Beautifully rich, dark cherry aromatics are accented by hints of blackberry, subtle earth tones and spice. The mid-palate is exceptionally silky, providing a lush backdrop for the rich cherry flavors and touch of toastiness from French oak barrels. The wine's complexity and density are complemented by a thread of natural acidity that culminates in a bright, lingering finish. Its impeccable balance makes this an excellent food wine and ensures great cellar potential.

TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 6.1 g/l

pH: 3.63

Alcohol: 14.7%

Production: 409 cases