



**VINEYARD SOURCES:** 100% *Rita's Crown Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills*. Planted in 2007, Rita's Crown has quickly become one of the most highly regarded vineyards in the Sta. Rita Hills appellation. The estate is located at an elevation of 600 to 950 feet on a dramatic southwest facing slope at the "crown" of the Santa Rita Hills, making it one of the highest planted vineyards in the AVA. Its elevation makes this site particularly exposed to coastal fog and cool marine breezes from the nearby Pacific Ocean, ideal for the production of premium quality Pinot Noir. The soils are sandy loam with ancient seashell deposits. The blocks used for this Pinot Noir are planted to Dijon clones 667, 777 and 828 on 101-14 rootstock.

**VINTAGE:** Contrary to the erratic weather of the 2010 and 2011 vintages, 2012 featured very favorable, well-timed weather patterns throughout the growing season. Winter rainfall was below average, but showers in March replenished the soil profile just as the vines were beginning the growth cycle. Consistently cool summer temperatures and several warm spells in September and October helped fully ripen the fruit. Crop size was characteristically small, which promoted concentration and complexity in the fruit. Grapes from Rita's Crown were harvested on September 26 and 28.

**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 17 months in French oak barrels with 38% new French oak and was bottled on March 19, 2014.

**TASTING NOTES:** This debut vineyard-designated Pinot Noir from Rita's Crown is elegant and rich with classic Pinot Noir aromatics and flavors. Vibrant dark cherry, wild blackberry and dark plum aromas are highlighted by hints of cinnamon spice and a subtle mineral component. On the palate, dark fruit flavors are enhanced by a touch of pomegranate, huckleberry and spice. The rich Pinot Noir flavors, balanced acid profile and soft tannins give the wine an exceptionally fluid texture from start to finish, assuring graceful development and excellent cellar potential.

#### TECHNICAL DATA

T.A.: 5.5 g/l

pH: 3.59

Alcohol: 14.7%

Production: 183 cases