



2018 RITA'S CROWN VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

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| Appellation | Sta. Rita Hills |
| T.A. | 5.8 g/l |
| pH | 3.50 |
| Alcohol | 14.2% |
| Production | 247 cases |

VINEYARD

100% Rita's Crown Vineyard

Planted in 2007, Rita's Crown is 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. Its elevation makes this site particularly exposed to coastal fog and cool marine breezes from the nearby Pacific Ocean, ideal for the production of outstanding 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

The 2018 vintage was our latest harvest since 2012. Late rains in March were well-timed and budbreak occurred about two weeks later than recent averages. Temperatures throughout the spring and summer remained cool. Nighttime temperatures were consistently chilly as well, in the low to mid-50s, ideal for retaining the natural acidity in the grapes. Canopies were healthy and well positioned to go the distance to ripen the fruit. Berries were small, and yields were customarily low, resulting in excellent concentration and intensity in the fruit. Rita's Crown Pinot Noir was harvested on September 11 at an average Brix of 24.3 degrees.

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 10 months in French oak barrels with 36% new French oak and was bottled on August 1, 2019.

TASTING NOTES

This exquisitely structured Pinot Noir offers beautiful aromas of ripe plum, boysenberry and wild strawberry complemented by hints of sage, toasted almond and a subtle ocean breeze character. The texture is rich and round with dark plum and dried cherry flavors enhanced by a touch of pink peppercorn, baking spices and dark chocolate on the finish. The wine's authentic fruit expression, gentle tannins and bright acidity profile assure graceful development and superb cellar potential.