



2015 SANFORD & BENEDICT VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

Appellation	Sta. Rita Hills
T.A.	5.9 g/l
pH	3.55
Alcohol	14.4%
Production	154 cases

VINEYARD

100% Sanford & Benedict Pinot Noir, Sta. Rita Hills

This vineyard is the birthplace of the Sta. Rita Hills appellation and played a significant role in bringing recognition to the great potential of the region. Planted by Richard Sanford and Michael Benedict in 1971, wines produced from this vineyard continue to set the highest quality standards. About 57% of this Pinot Noir hails from vines planted in 2008 to the highly regarded clone 943. The 43% balance is from a nearby block of clone 2A planted in 2011. The soil type is the Botella Series, a composition of both clay and loam with a high calcareous content, which drains well and helps keep yields low.

VINTAGE

The 2015 vintage is a record vintage in many ways. It was the earliest harvest on record, eclipsing the previous 2014 record by up to two weeks for most varietals. A relatively mild winter led to an early start to the ripening cycle. Once buds began to push, mild spring weather allowed them to develop at an accelerated pace uninterrupted by spring frosts. Yields were also record low, especially in Pinot Noir, averaging 30-50% below historical averages. Near perfect ripening conditions coupled with small berry size resulted in superb quality fruit. Grapes from Sanford & Benedict Vineyard were harvested on August 24.

WINEMAKING

Pinot Noir clusters for this wine were hand sorted before being de-stemmed and gravity fed to small open top fermenters. The must was immediately chilled for a pre-fermentation cold soak. During fermentation, concentration was enhanced by gently punching down the cap several times per day. The wine aged 11 months in French oak barrels with 38% new oak. The wine received a light egg white fining and was bottled unfiltered on August 9, 2016.

TASTING NOTES

This wine is profoundly rich and complex, combining Pinot Noir sourced from two different clones. Clone 943 clearly shows its seductive character with hints of pancetta and dark plum with subtle notes of brown spice, stone and earth. The 2A clone provides an exquisite counterpoint with pure dark raspberry aromas along with complementary floral components interwoven into the wine's core. The opulent texture is beautifully balanced by a gentle thread of acidity and supportive tannins, ensuring graceful aging for years to come.