



2004 Pinot Noir Julia's Vineyard

Cases Produced: 355
Harvest Date: 8/26/2004
Numbers @ Harvest: 23.0 Brix
Wine Numbers: 13.2% Alc. 3.60 pH No R.S.

Julia's Vineyard is located about 3 miles due east from Bien Nacido Vineyards in northern Santa Barbara County. My rows from block B4 (Marten Ray field blend), overlook the Santa Maria Valley and are beautifully trellised up for maximum fruit exposure.

The fruit came in on August 26th. This is on the early side for our area. The most exciting thing about the 2004 harvest is that the fruit ripened at a lower sugar than we have seen in ages. That means we have lower alcohols and more delicate wines. Yippi-Skippi! I picked 5.28 tons from my rows. The fermentation went well. I gently crushed the fruit into four (4' by 4' by 4') open top fermenter bins, avoiding the harsh wood tannins from stems. The juice was fermented with Ausmanhausen yeast to retain the fruity components. Punch down routines were performed to maximize the delicate flavors and subtle, elegant nuances of the Pinot Noir grape without extracting the more coarse, alcohol soluble components. The fermentation lasted around two weeks. The wine spent about 11 months in Francois Frere French oak barrels. I used 35% new wood to obtain round feel and a trace taste of smoke without overshadowing the fruit. I bottled the wine on August 10th after a gentle filtration to get out the big stuff. It may naturally throw some sediments over time.

The wine is very different from any of my other Pinot Noirs although I make them all the same way. It is the ripest flavor wise and most substantial structurally of my Pinot lineup. Dark cherries and black raspberries run through the mouth with dried spice that hovers like a cloud-thread of perfume. It is very deep and voluptuous with a haunting, smoky quality that is from the grapes themselves, not the oak. This wine will satisfy lovers of Burgundy with it's powerful fruit and, satin like texture and hints of mushrooms and earth. I call this Pinot The Haunting Other Woman because of it's dark, sensual side. The Robb Report says this Pinot achieves what few Pinot Noirs do: Marrying the forceful fruit of California with the more delicate mold, mushroom and earth essences we associate with grand crus of Burgundy.

This years wine will initially taste on the lean side to those people used to the previous years wines. I personally think young Pinot Noir should taste this way. The lower alcohol and more delicate fruit structure will ensure a fabulous wine for aging and a lovely drinking wine.

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