



2005 Pinot Noir Julia's Vineyard

Julia's Vineyard is located about 3 miles due east from Bien Nacido Vineyards in northern Santa Barbara County. My rows...7 through 12, from block B4 (Marten Ray clone), overlook the Santa Maria Valley and are beautifully trellised up for maximum fruit exposure.

The fruit came in on September 9th. This is about a normal harvest time but the fruit was not totally normal. The 2005 harvest was a Very large crop. The berry size was small but the cluster size was a bit large and the stems were enormous. I picked 5.4 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 Auszmanhausen 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 a round mouth 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. This wine was not finned in any way and it may naturally throw some sediment over time. All of my wines are Very low in sulfites because I am personally allergic to them.

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 cranberries and winter spices. 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 its' powerful fruit, satin like texture and hints of mushrooms and earth. I call this Pinot The Haunting Other Woman because it is dark, sensual and rather scary. 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 year's vintage is very supple and lush right from the start. The wine dropped clean in November, about four months before it usually does. It also tasted drinkable about the same time. I usually don't spend much time tasting my young wines but it was sooo good, I wanted to show it off to everyone. Every vintage is different. The 2004 was one to cellar for a few years and this 2005 vintage is one to revel in!

Back Label...Nov. 12th 2005, My 50th Birthday, My Wedding Day...

Cases Produced: 375

Harvest Date: 9/9/2005

Numbers @ Harvest: 24.3

Brix Wine Numbers: 14.5% Alc. 3.55 pH No R.S.