

WAXWING

2019 Pinot Noir, Deerheart Vineyard, Santa Cruz Mountains

The Vineyard: I was lucky to happen upon Deerheart in 2017, right before harvest, and brought in their full crop of Pinot grapes. This young vineyard and the wine that comes from it have turned out to be a revelation. It's riper than most Waxwing Pinots of the past; dark colored, richly fragrant, dense and complex on the palate. The vineyard is just 5 miles from the Pacific Ocean in southern San Mateo County on the road between La Honda and San Gregorio beach. Deerheart sees more than its share of coastal fog in the mornings during the growing season keeping temperatures down (rarely does the sight reach 90F) and producing a wine with vibrant ripe flavors but retaining a cutting edge of acidity.

The vineyard is generally picked at the end of Sept or start of Oct (late for Pinot Noir). To promote ripening in such a cool site the owners, Bob and JoAnn Larson, are experimenting with six different Pinot Noir clones (943,459,828,777, Wadenswil and 667) on 4 different rootstocks. In Block 1 they have also trellised the cane wires just 18" above ground to capture reflective heat from the soil. The Larsons have owned the 44 acre property that borders the La Honda Open Space Preserve for 15 years and started planting Pinot Noir blocks in 2013. There are currently 4 blocks planted over successive years from 2013 to 2016 covering about 3 acres. In 2019 the youngest blocks were still not producing enough fruit to be included in the harvest.

Winemaking: 100% of the fruit was destemmed and fermented in an oak upright fermenter. Cold soak lasted for five days. The tank was vigorously punched down or pumped over two to three time per day and primary fermentation lasted for one week at temperatures up to 92 F. The wine was aged in 40% new French oak barrels for 10 months and bottled with a light filtration.

Technical Data:

112 cases produced

Release date: November, 2020

Alcohol: 14.7%

Ageing: 10 months in 40% new French oak barrels and 60% once-used FR oak

Clones: Lots of clones including: 667, 777, 828, 943, 459, 2A, 459 on a variety of rootstocks.

Accolades: 95 points Wine Enthusiast

2020 Harvest Update: The 2020 Deerheart grapes were picked on Sept 14 and processed on Sept 15. Unfortunately, the wine was assessed as having moderate smoke impact and not worthy of further production as a table wine. The wine was distilled at Old World Spirits in November of 2020 with the goal of making distillation cuts around the smoke taint and producing a Brandy for barrel ageing. Stay tuned for more on the 2020!