

ANTHILL FARMS

2016 Tina Marie Vineyard Pinot Noir

Graton, Green Valley of the Russian River Valley, Sonoma County

2016 Vintage: 2016 was a transition year for the North Coast of California; drought conditions eased up somewhat, but the accompanying warm winter led to an early budbreak, with many vines emerging from dormancy in February. The growing season itself was a welcome return to normal: moderate temperatures prevailed throughout the spring and summer, with few of the punishing heat waves that we saw in 2014 and 2015. Despite the evenness of the weather, the early budbreak led to an equally early and incredibly rushed harvest. The wines are dark in color, very detailed, and refreshing, though with a decidedly mellow, welcoming streak.

Vineyard: This site lies in the heart of the Green Valley appellation, at the corner of Green Valley and Maddocks Roads. Owners and managers Ron Black and Stephen Bessone had the foresight to plant this hillside very densely to create more vine competition and lower yields. This approach, while perhaps not the most economic, delivers an intoxicating combination of lushness and poise to the wines from this site. We have loved growing and learning with Tina Marie for twelve years, and 2016 will be our final vintage.

Grab this while you can.

Winery: The fruit is generally harvested at 22-23 brix. We use about 40% whole clusters in the fermenter and destem the remaining fruit. The grapes have a very long cold soak, upwards of 12-14 days, where cap is punched only once daily and is protected by dry ice. We don't inoculate or add enzymes at primary stage and let uncultivated yeasts perform the fermentation, which is typically hot and fast, usually with three punchdowns per day. We very gently press the wine when it has been dry for a few days in the fermenter, and we do not separate the free run and press fractions. At this point, some of the whole berries do release a touch of fresh, carbonically-macerated juice. This means that the fermentation is officially completed in barrel. The wine sees about 10% new oak with the remainder neutral. We do not initiate malolactic fermentation, which often will last uninfluenced until the following Spring. We employ a bit of lees stirring at the beginning of élevage but then leave the wine to uncoil in barrel with periodic topping. We by and large bottle the Pinots 16-18 months post-harvest.

Tasting: The wines from Tina Marie have demonstrated increasing restraint over the years, and our 2016 further refines the vineyard's profile. The nose is resinous and perfumed, with notes of baking spice piercing through a sheet of gentle redcurrant aromatics. Persistent, chalky tannins define this wine's mouthfeel, offering a polished frame for the more delicate flavors of oolong tea and crushed raspberry.

Best drunk 2020 through 2028. Alcohol: 13.2%.

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