

# ANTHILL FARMS

## 2016 Abbey-Harris Vineyard Pinot Noir

Boonville, Anderson Valley, Mendocino County, CA

**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 two-acre vineyard sits at 900 to 1100 feet, facing south above the town of Boonville in the Anderson Valley. Its soils are part of the Wolfey-Bearwallow complex: roughly half the vineyard has very pale, sandy soil mixed with pink quartz, while the other half has more organic matter as well as large shale outcroppings.

We continue to farm and manage the vineyard with able help from owners Dona Abbey and Dan Harris.

**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. Single-vineyard Pinots see about 15% 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 buy and large bottle the Pinots 16-18 months post-harvest.

**Tasting:** Powerful rose petal and tar – typical of Abbey Harris – with fleeting scents of crushed stones and pennyroyal mark the aromas. The dense core of plum and cherry fruit remains light on its feet, juxtaposing the depth of flavors we have come to expect from this rocky-soiled two acre gem. Ample structure will ensure the 2016 vintage will sing with cellaring, for those of us with a bit of patience.

Pinot Noir grown in Barolo, perhaps? Alcohol: 13.2%.

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