

ANTHILL FARMS

2016 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

Anderson Valley, Mendocino County, CA

2015 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: With this Pinot, we were looking to create a food-friendly, nuanced wine that represents the unique character of the Anderson Valley. Somewhat remote from most of Northern California's winegrowing districts, this valley shelters a surprisingly harmonious blend of the wild and the civilized: in a single vista, one can see sheep ranches, redwood groves, apple orchards, and impenetrable oak scrub.

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. We use no new oak on the appellation Pinots. 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 elevage 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 2016 expresses pungent, lifted plum, dried rose and sous bois aromas. An alluring melange of cherry and herbal flavors fan out from the entry to the palate. Elegant and generous texture coats the mouth leading to fresh, crunchy red fruits that linger on the finish. It successfully captures what we see as the essence of fruit and savory character of the region. Alcohol: 13.1%.

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