

ANTHILL FARMS

2017 Peters Vineyard Pinot Noir — Sebastopol, Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

2017 Harvest: Two thousand seventeen was a year of extremes in the North Coast. Cool winter and spring led to a normal, even crop. This was the second year back to normal rainfall after a handful of drought years with most of the precipitation coming in winter and early spring, further enlivening the soils and ecosystems surrounding the vines. As the vintage moved into summer we began to see severe heat spikes starting in June and recurring until Labor Day weekend when temperatures reached well above the 100's. Summer and fall, sad to say, seem to have transformed into drier, warmer and unfortunately windier times in California. This trinity is ultimately the recipe for the devastating fires we saw in October. For Anthill, the grapes had been all harvested, and, aside from going extra-old-school on a couple of fermenting lots because of massive power outages, we weren't affected with what went to barrel. Overall, the resulting wines reflect a Classic character. Plenty of fruit and texture with general structure that reflects more of the Old World.

Vineyard: Randy Peters farms this vineyard outside of Sebastopol in western Sonoma County. The southern slopes of these hills form the northern edge of the Petaluma Gap, which rushes cool, marine air from the Pacific Ocean inland. The vines, a mix of Pommard and 777 planted well over thirty years ago, produce grapes that ripen unusually slowly due to the vineyard's often-present morning fog and evening chill.

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 punch downs 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 single-vineyard bottlings will 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 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: Peters Vineyard is a medium bodied yet brooding wine. Deep cherry, dried rose, tobacco and freshly turned soil notes give the Peters a distinctly dark feel. This year's version of Peters is reticent and tightly wound, with clear fruit that bodes well for a couple years down the road. Drink fall 2019-2027. Alcohol 13.6%.

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