
2002 Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir

Family of Santa Cruz Mountains Wines

CINNABAR

VINEYARDS & WINERY

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Vintage

The winter of 2001-02 was characterized by above average rainfall and low temperatures that maintained a cold, wet grip through spring. Consequently, budbreak was delayed until March 30 (7–10 days late) while bloom was pushed back to May 25. Berry set was quite successful, but the coolness carried through July and August, delaying veraison one week until late July.

Green clusters were thinned at 95% of veraison and leaves were removed periodically. The cool weather persisted through September, postponing harvest for nearly a week. The pristine crop bore excellent aromas, concentrated flavors and sound structure.

The Vineyards

Like many vintners in cool climates, the temptation for making highly prized pinot noir proved to be too much for the Cinnabar team. Its members were confident the temperamental grape variety could be successfully grown on their “island” vineyards in the Santa Cruz Mountains. After much consideration, a four-acre section with northeast exposure was determined to be the most likely to produce the deep, well-balanced style they envisioned.

In 1994, six distinct clones or selections were planted on three different rootstocks at 1,200 feet above sea level. Each was chosen for the specific qualities it would contribute to the finished wine.

Soils mostly consist of red clay-shale loam with excellent water holding capacity. A 10–15 percent slope provides good air drainage to help inhibit botrytis and fungal diseases. Lyre trellising maximizes leaf exposure while drip irrigation is available if needed.

Non-till farming feeds the naturally occurring ecosystem and contributes to a healthy nutritional life cycle. Cuttings from the various grasses, clover and legumes are left in the rows to decompose and release nitrogen-fixing bacteria. Added compost supplies the soil with billions of wanted bacteria and fungi, while lime and gypsum balance pH and add calcium respectively. Beneficial insects, the natural predators of unwanted pests, dwell in the cover crops and help protect the vines.



Tasting Notes

The mountain-grown fruit is fully expressed by an earthy nose of rose petals, black cherry, vanilla and smoked meats that intertwines with flavors of ripe cherry, spice and toasted oak. The firm, rounded tannins, rich mouthfeel and moderately long finish pair well with honey baked ham, barbecued salmon or ricotta gnocchi with garlic and sage brown butter.

— Winemaker George Troquato

Technical Data

APPELLATION:

Santa Cruz Mountains

VARIETAL CONTENT:

100% pinot noir

HARVEST DATE:

September 13, 2002

YIELD:

2 tons per acre

FERMENTATION:

3-day cold soak; 5–7 days in small, open-top bins

AGING:

18 mos. in French oak barrels (50% new, Allier Forest, Remond cooper)

FINISHED ALCOHOL:

14.1%

TOTAL ACID:

0.65g per 100ml

pH:

3.70

TOTAL PRODUCTION:

100 cases