



THE HARVEST

Every year Sleepy Hollow Vineyard faces the most difficult set of challenges from Mother Nature. Our piece at the top of the hill in Vineyard A Set 1 south does not get much sunlight and lives much of the time in the fog and wind. To take advantage of the reduced sunlight we separate the foliage from the fruiting zone to get more direct light onto the berries and to thicken the skins. These set of vines are susceptible to botrytis and must be vigorously managed. Mother Nature's constant attack on these very old vines is a supreme challenge to the concept of winegrowing and often is the most satisfying vineyard work that I do.

The two thousand two vintage was an extraordinary vintage. It was initially defined by a cool, wet spring, which resulted in a small, high quality crop with intense flavors and uniform ripeness. After the cool, windy, summer months, a modest and even heat brought on final ripening. The effects of the weather were exhibited by a later than normal harvest which began on October 1st. We did see about a 30% increase in dehydration of the berries as a result of the warmer weather during the last days of September. And there was approximately 15% gray rot from the moisture given off by the dense morning fog. Yields were reduced by triage to 30 hectoliters per hectare and sugars soaked up to 14.75% potential alcohol as a result of the dehydration. Tasting through the previous vintages of this wine has led me to think that this may be the best vintage of Sleepy Hollow Pinot produced to date

The Vineyard

Sleepy Hollow Vineyard is situated along the Santa Lucia bench in the northwestern section of the Salinas Valley of Monterey County. Planted to Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in 1974, it was independently owned until 1990 when Robert Talbott purchased the property for his Talbott Winery.

The vineyard is broken up into two major parcels: A and B. Within Parcel A, we farm 10 acres in Set 1 South, which is located at the top of the gently sloping vineyard. We select blocks located high on the slopes to ensure good drainage and intensity of flavors in the grapes. Soils consist of sandy loam and Monterey shale making for excellent drainage. The vines are on their own roots and are a combination of Martini and an upright clone the French call "Pinot Droid." Spacing is set at 6 x 10 with a split canopy trellis designed to acclimate the clusters to the sun early in the year, thus avoiding sunburn later in the summer. This trellis design also helps to ripen the fruit more evenly. Pruning is conducted in the winter with only 2 spurs per cordon kept. And in the spring, we prune to 2 clusters per cane

The Production

Only the best Pinot Noir grape clusters are handpicked in the vineyard in the early morning hours when the fruit is still cool. Pinot Noir has a tendency to ferment very quickly thus preventing the wine full color and flavor extraction. To arrest the on-set of immediate fermentation, dry ice is added to the small open top fermenting vats. This "cold soak" (at 45 °F) slows fermentation while saturating the juice with rich fruit flavor and true Pinot Noir color from prolonged contact with the grape skins. Concomitant with the primary fermentation is malolactic fermentation (malic acid to lactic acid), which reduces the total acid and imparts softness to the wine. The grapes are pigeaged (foot treaded) 3 to 5 times daily to extract color and tannins. We then press the wine at 1 – 2 % sugar and allow it to complete fermentation in barrel; this helps integrate the qualities of oak in the wine. The wine was aged in 2 year old Sirugue 100% French oak barrels for 22 months and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. The bottled wine was further aged 14 months to allow the integration of the wine to become more complete.