

2000 Pinot Noir

Cohn Vineyard

Russian River Valley

Sonoma County

The Vineyard: The Cohn vineyard, overlooking the Russian River Valley and the Santa Rosa plain, lies at the northeastern corner of the Russian River Valley appellation, where Dry Creek Valley meets the Russian River. It's an inspiring place, up a long, twisted, mountain road, the vineyard stretches across a rocky, table-top plateau with views as far as San Francisco. In the sparse landscape of displaced river rock and volcanic rubble, the vines struggle for survival, producing a small crop of small berries on vines gnarled beyond their years. Ah, but are they tasty, just ask the wild boar and turkeys that manage to feed on them. The Pinot vineyard is about 7 acres from which we hand pick about 15 tons in a good year. Nature is in perfect balance here for Pinot Noir, just the right amount of cooling summer fog, chilly nights, warm days, no rain in the summer, no pollution, peace and tranquility. It shows in the wine.

The Vintage: The millennium year was a mixed bag for North Coast grapes. The early harvest was perfect, then it rained in October and remained cold, so the later ripening varieties had trouble. The Cohn Vineyard came in early and great. We picked at dawn and had the grapes to the winery by one, still cool from the morning air.

The Wine: Pinot Noir is challenging to make because the flavors are delicate and easily destroyed. The flavor essence seems to be in the thin layer of flesh just inside the skin that bruises and oxidizes easily; it can be cooked in hot weather and lose its more interesting aromas and taste if fermented too warmly, or thin if kept to cool.

This one is a collaboration of 3 winemakers: Robert Rex, Michael Browne, and the late John Farrington. We've each tried myriad techniques for making Pinot Noir, and chose several for this particular wine: destemming with minor maceration, leaving whole berries (a recurring theme in Deerfield wines); tossing in about 20% whole clusters, stems & all; cold soaking a large portion of the must for several days (to accentuate the flavors of that inner, fleshy layer). We introduced several strains of yeast and were careful with the temperature, to extract the best tannins and glycerin without cooking the flavors.

Pinot Noir can easily be overshadowed by lesser oak barrels that are too aggressive or too green. We used an eclectic mix of French oak from very small, renowned Burgundian coopers. Each was selected for its compatibility with the style we'd set out to achieve, one of delicate balance of all components, harmony of nose, taste and finish. John liked to compare wines to women: "There are those big masculine Pinots with hair on their chest but not this. This is a brunette in heels, with a smile on her face, a twinkle in her eye, on the way to the bedroom, sexy and beautiful." This wine is decidedly feminine. It's been a joy to watch this wine come forth, from the vineyard to the bottle, fingers crossed, hoping our thousands of educated guesses were right. You be the judge! We produced 350 cases, in 6-pack, lay-down boxes.

Harvest & Winemaking Data:

Winemakers:	Robert Rex, Michael Browne, John Farrington
Harvested:	September 8, 2000
Brix at Harvest:	24.8° Brix
Acid at Harvest:	5.59 g/L
pH at Harvest:	3.62
Fermentation techniques:	20% whole cluster, 40% whole berries, four separate open top fermentors, punched by hand, no pumps used. Cold soaked for four days. Acid adjusted in two lots. Pressed out after 12 days. Maximum fermentation temperature 85°
Yeasts:	RC212 (Burgundy isolate), Assmanshausen, Willem Selyem isolate
Barrel aging:	All French oak, five different coopers, medium and medium plus toast, aged for 19 months, topped biweekly.
Fining:	none
Filtration:	bug screen at bottling
Alcohol:	14.1% by volume
SO2 at bottling:	15 parts per million
SO2 at release:	Less than 5 ppm
Bottled:	April 23, 24, 2002
Released:	September 1, 2002
Cases bottled:	342
Awards and Reviews:	91 points: Allaboutjazz.com; Silver Medal: Sonoma County Harvest Fair

