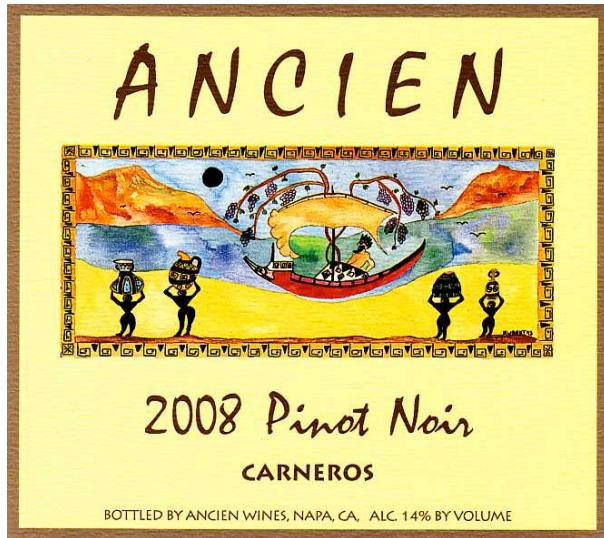


Ancien Wines

2008 Carneros Pinot Noir



ABOUT THE VINEYARD...

Toyon Farm is located on a southwest-facing slope on the eastern (Napa) side of the Carneros. The top soil is a rich, dark clay that averages just around 24 inches in depth. These soils promote a dark, brooding fruit, emphasizing texture and tannin. We planted the first block of this vineyard in 1998 with cuttings originating from the Swan estate in the Russian River Valley--and these, in turn, were brought from Burgundy by Joseph Swan in the 1950's and '60's. A few years later, we planted a second block of Dijon 115 vines to balance the deepness of the Swan, emphasized in these soils, with some floral aromatics.

ABOUT THE VINTAGE...

2008 was a lesson in the primary importance of balance in the vineyard. A drier than usual winter exacerbated the existing drought conditions, and a late spring series of frosty mornings cut down the yields considerably. A summer full of warm mornings coddled the fruit as it developed and made for an earlier than average harvest. The lower yields made it possible for the vines to withstand the stress of the drought and deliver healthy, ripe fruit full of concentrated fruit flavor. The vines achieved this level of balance naturally, and what started out like difficult year resolved itself into a solid vintage, emphasizing concentrated fruit flavors and subtle tannins. The density of the fruit illuminated a different side of the Dijon fruit, producing a wine with an intense palate and a long, subtle finish in addition to the more typical and frontal aromatics.

ABOUT THE WINE...

We separated the entire lot into 1 ton, open-top fermenters, employing traditional punch-downs by hand in order to achieve optimal extraction. About 5% of the fruit was fermented as whole clusters. The wine was aged in an array of French cooperage, nearly half new, and gently racked once prior to bottling. Grapes, must, and wines were moved using gravity through to the barrel and using inert gas through racking and bottling.

TASTING NOTES...

As usual, this is a brooding Pinot Noir, emphasizing dark flavors and rich textures. However, the nose is more explosive than usual leading with ripe berries kirsch, dried rose petals, strawberries and ripe plums accented by cacao, clove, and cardamom. The palate opens with more spices and mid-palate of plum, strawberry, and cherry. The palate continues to develop richness, filling the mouth nicely with round, ripe fruits. The weight is nicely counter-balanced by a bright acidity, and the finish moves again towards dried fruits, tobacco and dark chocolate, with a lingering and rich minerality. The wine is well-structured and will continue to gain depth and subtly for next next 5-8 years.