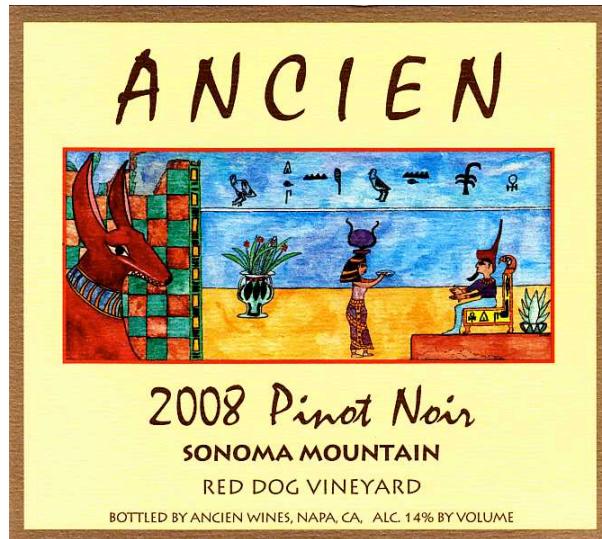


Ancien Wines

2008 Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir



ABOUT THE VINEYARD...

The Red Dog Vineyard sits atop Sonoma Mountain on the cool, western side. It was planted in 2000 by Tom and Debbie Engel. It is planted mostly to Swan Selection with cuttings from the Mink Vineyard, with a smaller block of Dijon clones 777 and 115. The vineyard is situated on the eastern face of a ridge, and the top is just under 1000 feet elevation. At this height, the vineyard is almost continually cooled by Pacific currents moving inland through the Petaluma Gap. The soils are some of the most ancient soils in Sonoma County and have been leached of nutrients by wind and rain for aeons. It is a truly spectacular vista point but a challenging place to grow grapes.

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. The higher altitudes of the Red Dog Vineyard protected the vines from frost, for the most part, however yields remained a bit lower than usual. 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 a difficult year resolved itself into a very solid vintage.

ABOUT THE WINE...

The grapes were destemmed into our one ton, open top fermenters and cold soaked for 4 days. We punched down by hand 4 times per day at the beginning of fermentation. This was decreased to 2 times per day by the end of fermentation. We inoculated with RC 212 yeast (a Burgundian isolate) and fermented warm, peaking about 94°, with an additional 14 days of maceration and skin contact. The wine was aged entirely in French barrels from the Tonnellerie Remond cooperage, and a majority of those barrels were new. The wine was racked once prior to bottling. Wine movements were made by pushing with inert gas all the way until bottling. 255 cases produced.

TASTING NOTES...

The nose opens to an exotic flush of roses, lilacs, holiday spices, dried mushrooms, and dried cherries. The fruit expands in the glass to include fresh black cherry, cherry preserve, ripe plums, dried cranberries, and hints of geranium and pipe tobaccos. The palate is rich and concentrated, with the fruit flavors tending toward plum, black cherry, and pomegranate. Boysenberry and strawberry are hinted at as the acidity lifts the mid-palate. The palate fills with an earthen and tannic strength and the finish is long and dominated by fine, dry tannins and dried fruits. Age will continue to add softer notes of fresh mushrooms and tilled earth. We recommend decanting this wine. This vineyard always ages well, and this vintage should be no exception. At 6-8 years, the wine will exhibit an exotic and rich bouquet with subtle, overlapping layers of flavor while still retaining bright and youthful fruit in its core. At 10-12 years, it will be silken, layered, and still very much alive.

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