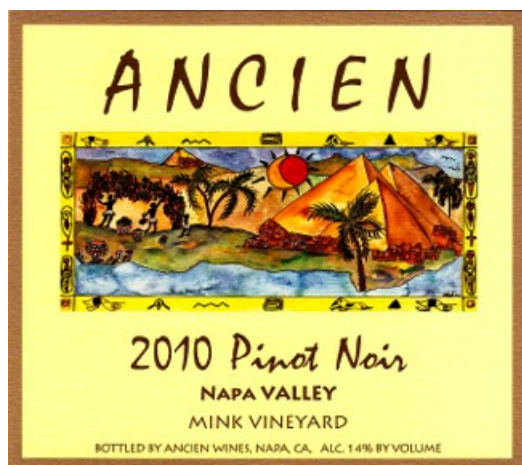


 **Ancien Wines** 
2010 Napa Valley Pinot Noir
MINK VINEYARD



ABOUT THE VINEYARD...

The Mink Vineyard is located next door to the winery, in the Coombsville Viticultural Area in the southeastern corner of Napa Valley. Open to the same morning fogs and afternoon breezes that cool Carneros to the west, Coombsville is consistently one of the coolest pockets in Napa. Mink sits on a level bench just leeward of a knoll that slows down the prevailing maritime winds, allowing cooler air to settle, and making Mink's mesoclimate a couple degrees cooler, even, than the surrounding hills. But the real secret to Mink's explosive flavors, smooth, mouth-coating minerality, comes from the soil. Underneath the top few feet of alluvial clays and cobblestones (typical throughout the southern reaches of Napa), is a layer of compressed volcanic ash, called tufa. The tufa drains the top soils, storing moisture in rich clays underneath. The vines are able, with some work, to grow roots into the tufa layer, accessing moisture during the long, dry growing season. In a typical year, Mink can be practically dry-farmed.

ABOUT THE VINTAGE...

2010 was a challenge to the nerves as well as a chance for experienced wine makers to strut their stuff. In other words, those with experience were advantaged with the working knowledge of how best to manage their vineyards and to keep their fruit clean and healthy. Heavy spring rains were followed by a summer season that was significantly cooler than average. A mid-season heat spike, with temperatures suddenly topping 100, left a percentage of clusters burned up and dried out. The coolness benefited the Mink Vineyard, producing bright fruit, with full, rounded flavors and soft tannins. The fruit was in the hopper before the early fall rains bedeviled many area vineyards, so rot was not a problem. Yield, however, was low.

ABOUT THE WINE...

The grapes were destemmed into small, one-ton, open-top fermenters, where we employed a submerged cap device during the first half of fermentation. This helps to extract the rich flavors and deep color that we expect from this vineyard. We finished the fermentation with traditional hand punch downs, and aged the wine in Billon cooperage, a barrel that tends to sit subtly underneath the delicate fruit, lifting aromas without crowding them. The wines were racked once, gently, prior to bottling. Grapes, must, and wines were moved using gravity through to the barrel and using inert gas through racking and bottling. 170 cases produced.

TASTING NOTES...

This is a Pinot Noir that emphasizes elegance and grace, without sacrificing weight and profundity. A nose of blueberry, cherries, and huckleberry pie, floats atop dried currant notes, mushrooms, and wet stone. The palate reveals more stoniness rounded with plum and pluot, chocolate and currant, spiced with notes of pipe tobaccos. As always, the finish is dominated with the fine, chalky and mineral tannins coating the entire palate and lingering long into the finish. A singular California Pinot Noir. Drinks well now and is a Chef's boon companion. Will mature with grace for 8-12 years.

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