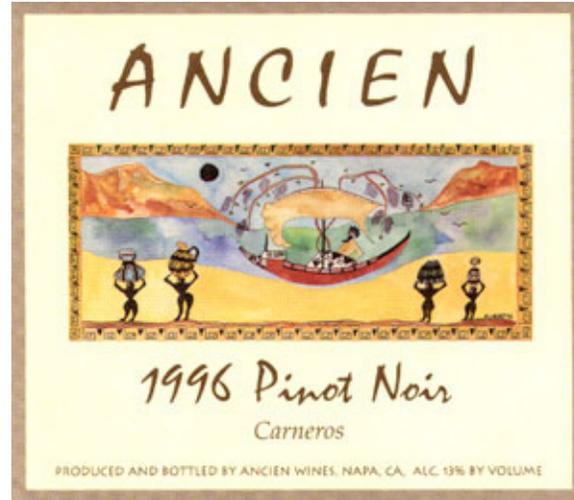


# Ancien Wines

## 1996 Carneros Pinot Noir



### **ABOUT THE VINEYARD...**

The 1996 Ancien Carneros Pinot noir comes from 25 year old vines - part of the first planting at Domaine Chandon in the early '70s. The vineyard is located on a northeastern slope in thin sandy, clay/loam soil with excellent drainage. The combination of vine age and the northeastern slope (sheltering the vines from the brisk Carneros winds) makes this a unique site. Located in southern Carneros (with a view of San Pablo bay), this is a cool site even by Carneros standards. The vines are very low in vigor due to the austere site, allowing plenty of sunlight to make its way to the small clusters. The fruit expresses itself with intense earthy, mushroom, and sometimes meaty aromas, Dark red fruit predominates with anise, spice, and blackberry notes providing added complexity.

### **ABOUT THE VINTAGE...**

1996 was an unusually warm summer that cooled down just in time for the "stretch run", allowing great development of flavors in the grapes. The 1996 vintage will be known for the intensity of its forward fruit and approachability. This wine has shown well from early on and has exhibited few of the adolescent moody periods so typical of Pinot noir. While it ultimately may not enjoy the longevity that the 1994 and 1995 vintages will, it may well drink better over its first 2 - 3 years.

### **ABOUT THE WINE...**

The grapes were 100% destemmed into an open top fermenter and punched down 3 times per day at the beginning of fermentation. This was decreased to 2 times per day by the end of fermentation. A small inoculum of "Assmannshausen" cultured yeast made for a slow start to fermentation, allowing us to "work" the fruit assuring full extraction. Once the fermentation started, it roared, peaking at 94°F. The wine was gently pressed at dryness and went directly to barrel. The wine was aged entirely in French oak from the coopers Francois Freres and Billon - 33% new oak was used. The wine was raked once prior to bottling. Wine movements were done by gravity or by pushing with inert gas in the production of this wine all the way until bottling. Wine analysis: Alc. 13.9%, pH 3.68, ta 6.2 g/l., r.s. 0.01 g/l. 340 cases produced.

### **TASTING NOTES...**

Deep garnet color. Intense aromas of black cherry, raspberry, cocoa/chocolate, spice, and sl. earthy nuances. The palate is smooth and velvety in texture, bursting with blackberry/cherry fruit, anise, chocolate, and coffee. The finish is long and focused with lingering bright fruit. Drink now or hold 5 -7 yrs.