

Ancien Wines

1997 Carneros Pinot Noir



ABOUT THE VINEYARD...

The 1997 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, the northeastern slope (sheltering the vines from the brisk Carneros winds), and the lighter soils combine to make this a unique site. Located in southern Carneros, this is a cool site even by Carneros standards.

The vines are very low in vigor due to the shallow soils, 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...

1997 was a bit of a dicotomy, consisting of a very warm June and July and ending with a rather long, cool stretch in September - punctuated by a few short hot spells. The grapes developed impressive flavor intensity and color with above average "hang time". The timing of the heat spells may have aided in the development of a underlying tannic structure that is apparent in this vintage. Finally, a late heat spell sent the sugars soaring as the vulnerable grapes leaped to ripeness practically over night.

ABOUT THE WINE...

The grapes were 100% destemmed into an open top fermenter and punched down 4 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 95°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. 14.4%, pH 3.66, ta 6.2 g/l. , r.s. 0.01 g/l. 365 cases produced.

TASTING NOTES...

Deep garnet color. Intense aromas of spice, cocoa/chocolate, deep blackberry and black cherry fruit with sl. earthy nuances. The palate is full in texture, bursting with blackberry/cherry fruit, anise, chocolate, and coffee. The finish is long and focused with lingering bright fruit and bright acidity. The wine has good tannic structure and will age nicely, unfolding additional layers with time. Drink or hold 6 - 8 years.

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