

Ancien Wines

1999 Carneros Pinot Noir



ABOUT THE VINEYARD...

Our Carneros Pinot Noir is a blend of two very similar vineyards situated near the Napa-Sonoma county line at the southern end of the appellation. The two vineyards, Domaine Chandon #105, and the Ferguson Ranch were both planted in 1973. Both are austere sites with lean soils and low vigor. The similarity of site, rootstock (both are St. George - 8X12 spacing), clone (old Martini selection), and vine age ensure a commonality between the wines. The 28 year old vines, becoming rare as many of California's early Pinot noir plantings succumb to phylloxera or virus, lend an underlying concentration to the wine.

ABOUT THE VINTAGE...

1999 was another cool vintage, following the El Nino year of 1998. Fruit ripening was very slow, this being the latest vintage we have seen - later, in fact, than Burgundy. As we worried, the grapes responded by developing darker skin pigmentation, and more layered flavors. Flavors were great several weeks before harvest. A blast of dry heat during the last week of September finally sent sugars soaring to ripeness. We picked all our vineyards in the shortest window of time we had seen.

ABOUT THE WINE...

The grapes were 100% destemmed into an open top fermenter 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. A small inoculum of RC212 (burgundy isolate) cultured yeasts carried out the fermentation. We employed a very warm fermentation, 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, Cadus, and Billon - 38% new. The wine was racked once prior to bottling. Wine movements were made by pushing with inert gas all the way until bottling. Wine analysis: Alc. 13.8 %, pH 3.66, ta 6.2 g/l, r.s. 0.01 g/l. 975 cases produced.

TASTING NOTES...

Deep garnet color. Intense aromas of spice, coffee, cocoa/chocolate, rich blackberry and black cherry fruit with sl. earthy nuances. The palate is full and velvety 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 underlying tannic structure and will age nicely, unfolding additional layers with time. Drink or hold 5 - 7 years.