

GARY FARRELL

VINEYARDS & WINERY

2014 McDONALD MOUNTAIN VINEYARD PINOT NOIR RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

VINEYARDS

The McDonald Mountain Vineyard is nestled in a very cool area near the border dividing the Russian River Valley from the Petaluma Gap. This beautiful area, referred to as the Sebastopol Hills neighborhood of the Russian River Valley, is where the fog first arrives inland from the Pacific Ocean in the morning, and where it burns off last in the afternoon. The vineyard was planted in 2008 on one to four feet of Goldridge sandy loam underlain with Los Osos clay. The diverse clonal selection includes 115, 667, 777, Pomard, 828 and Elite. The latter is a suitcase selection that produces some of the most exotic fruit characteristics that we've ever tasted from Pinot Noir in Sonoma County. The cool temperatures, daily fog, breezy afternoons, steep slopes and dry farming practices all contribute to the production of very small, but extremely flavor-packed clusters and berries that always retain plenty of natural acidity.

VINTAGE

The 2014 vintage was one of the best, and certainly the earliest recorded start to harvest in the past decade! We are extremely grateful for another amazing vintage despite the ongoing drought conditions, which contributed to lower yields, smaller berries, great intensity and tremendous concentration of flavors. Grapevines can benefit from a dry climate because it pushes them into a state of stress, causing them to produce denser, more complex flavors, while also protecting them from mold and mildew pressure that is often associated with humid conditions. Although harvest started early, the grapes did not ripen prematurely. The mild winter and spring weather, combined with dry conditions and long, sunny days, led to early onset of grapevine development (bud break, bloom, véraison), but overall hang time was pretty close to normal, so the flavors were ready when it came time to start picking in mid-August. Moderate temperatures persisted throughout the harvest season, allowing us to pick everything at optimal ripeness levels. Because we started early, we avoided the usual mid- to late September heat wave and we were almost finished by the time some other producers were just getting started.

WINEMAKING

Grapes were harvested in the cool morning hours then brought to the winery. After a careful hand sorting, fruit was de-stemmed, then transferred to small, open-top tanks. The juice was chilled to 45°F then allowed to cold soak for 5-7 days before fermentation was started. During fermentation, the cap was punched down twice per day, with an occasional, gentle juice pump-over through a screen, only as needed to cool the fermentation and give the yeast a boost of oxygen. After fermentation, the new wine and its solids were allowed to sit in tank for 10-15 days of extended maceration, a period during which the tannins soften and the primary fermentation esters develop more complexity. The wine was then gently pressed off the skins and seeds, inoculated for malolactic fermentation and racked into 40% new French oak barrels for 16 months of barrel aging on primary lees. The wines were racked off the primary lees only once, just before bottling.

TASTING NOTES

Enticing aromas of white pepper, green tea, and fresh thyme lead the way to an array of dried red fruits and cherry cola. Porcini mushrooms, bay leaf, and an essence of forest floor provide depth and intrigue. The palate is exceptionally bright and vibrant upon entry with flavors of Bing cherry and strawberry preserves. Elegant, silky wood tannins from lightly toasted French oak barrels lend structure and balance while contributing to a long, savory finish.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

APPELLATION

Russian River Valley

VINEYARDS

McDonald Mountain

COMPOSITION

100% Pinot Noir

FERMENTATION & AGING

16 months in 40% new French oak

ALCOHOL

14.0%

pH / T.A.

3.28 / 7.5 gm/L

PRODUCTION

462 Cases

BOTTLING DATE

February 8, 2016

RELEASE DATE

May 2017

RETAIL PRICE

\$65