

DIERBERG

Pinot Noir

SANTA MARIA VALLEY

2007



ALC H&B VIN CO

2007 DIERBERG PINOT NOIR SANTA MARIA VALLEY

THE VINEYARD

Dierberg Vineyard is situated atop a sandy loam mesa above the South Bank of the Santa Maria River. The ranch features a series gently rolling hills and soils that are uncharacteristic of the growing area. The higher loam content and slightly heavier texture of our soil tends to produce Pinot Noirs that are more powerful in structure and more savory in flavor-profile than is typical for the Santa Maria Valley.

We've planted the ranch to a number of different Burgundian clones and some not so common California selections, all on limiting rootstocks adapted to the soil conditions of the property, which offer us a wide palate of colors and textures from which to paint the most accurate picture of our ranch that we can.

Wines from the Dierberg Vineyard—both our own and those from producers who purchase our fruit—take a long time to evolve and unwind, making them rewarding candidates for a sojourn in the wine cellar.

VINTAGE NOTES

Drought-level rainfall and severe winter freezes during the December holidays started the growing season in an atypical fashion. Many young shoots were stunted due to the freezes and only began to show acceptable vigor when mowed down our "green manure" cover crop consisting of oats, bell beans, vetch and peas in late spring. Conditions during bloom time were ideal, with moderate temperatures and an absence of our normal winds, and completed in less than a week. Meanwhile, set was erratic from shoot to shoot, with some shoots setting as many as three clusters while others set none. In spite of low winter rainfall, weather during the growing season was generally cool and we irrigated very little, only 2 to 4 gallons per vine for the entire season. Veraison was very even and weather during harvest was warm and steady. We harvested an extremely light below crop load at a steady pace during the last two weeks of September and the first week of October. Acidities were vibrant, tannins were impeccably balanced and

alcohols were moderate. In 2007, after several years of implementing our Natural Farming practices, the ranch yielded absolutely pristine, pure fruit, producing a wine of class and breeding.

WINEMAKING

Fruit is harvested by soil type—across several different blocks—rather than by discreet clonal selections. The grapes are destemmed but not crushed and occasionally whole clusters are included based upon the gut instinct of the winemaking team. Very little sulfur is added in the fermenter and no yeast nutrients are used. The must is chilled to 55 degrees Fahrenheit and allowed warm slowly and commence fermentation on its own yeast. Peak fermentation temperatures are in the high 80's and low 90's and the wine stays on its skins for an average of 18 days. The new wine finishes primary fermentation and undergoes secondary fermentation in barrel without the addition of commercial malo-lactic starters. The 2007 Dierberg was aged in 45% new French oak for 18 months and was bottled unfiltered and unfiltered in early April, 2009.

The 2007 Dierberg Pinot Noir marks a return to the intense style that has characterized the vineyard. As opposed to 2006, a vintage defined by high botrytis pressure and earlier harvest dates, 2007 was dry and fair during September, allowing us to harvest in a pragmatic fashion. The lower than normal crop load brings a density to the wine that is breathtaking, while the improved vineyard health resulting from our Natural Farming practices imbues it with a level of refinement far beyond any vintage to date.

Picking began the second week of September on the western corner of the ranch with sugars averaging 22.8° brix (12.8% potential alcohol) and continued over a period of three weeks, ending on the far eastern edge of vineyard at 26.1° brix (14.6% potential alcohol). Because of the pristine quality of the fruit, macerations lasted longer than normal—a full 21 days in most cases—and our pump over regime was reduced one short mixing per day. Oak from the Bertranges forest coopered for us by François Frères was used exclusively in the aging of this wine.

TASTING NOTES

The finished wine reflects the character of the vintage, with intense aromas of blackberry, herbes de Provence and wet flagstone. The flavors of coffee and pure blackberry are lifted by vibrant acidity and culminate in a firm blanket of tannins. Definitely a wine for the ages, the 2007 Dierberg Vineyard Pinot drinks well now with the most deeply flavored foods, but will reward patient cellaring for decades to come.

pH: 3.57
TA: 0.65 g/L
Alcohol: 14.1%

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