

GARY FARRELL

VINEYARDS & WINERY

2019 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, Pommard, 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

After record-breaking rainfall in late February, causing major flooding in the areas surrounding the Russian River, a relatively cool spring followed, delaying bud break into mid to late March. The delayed onset and cool temperatures would predict the beginning of harvest at a more typical date, compared to a few past vintages. The month of May brought more heavy rains. Thankfully, the cold temperatures and delayed start of bud break meant that bloom was later as well, and only a few vineyards had started to produce flowers, so damage to the crop was minimal. Summer temperatures were perfect and mild. By June, growers began to see that a big crop was forming. Come July, veraison was under way and growers had to drop lots of unevenly ripening clusters on several occasions. Despite the quantity of clusters per vine, flavor, concentration and tannin levels were quite excellent. Canopy management was extremely important in that fruit thinning was necessary at multiple stages of vine development.

Winemaking

Grapes were harvested in the early morning hours then brought to the winery. After hand sorting, 60% of the grapes were de-stemmed, then transferred to open-top tanks, while 40% of the fruit was added on top as whole clusters. The juice was chilled to 45°F and allowed to cold soak for 4-7 days before fermentation. During fermentation, the cap was gently punched down 2-3 times per day. After fermentation, the new wine and its solids sat in tank for 7-10 days of extended maceration, a period during which the tannins soften, and the primary fermentation esters develop complexity. The wine was then gently pressed off the skins and seeds, inoculated for malolactic fermentation and racked into 40% new French oak barrels (light toast Ana Selection, François Frères and Tonnellerie O) for 15 months of barrel aging on primary lees.

Tasting Notes

Savory aromas of white pepper, black tea, and fresh herbs lead the way to an array of dried strawberries and pomegranate. Chantarelle mushrooms, bay leaf, and a background of forest floor provide depth and intrigue. The palate is bright and tangy upon entry with flavors of Bing cherry and cranberry. Silky wood tannins from lightly toasted French oak barrels lend structure and balance while contributing to a long, savory finish.

Appellation

Russian River Valley

Vineyards

McDonald Mountain Vineyard

Composition

100% Pinot Noir

Fermentation & Aging

15 months in 40% new
French oak

Alcohol

13.9%

pH / T.A.

3.33 / 7.3 gm/L

Production

604 Cases

Bottling Date

January 25, 2021

Release Date

September 2023

Retail Price

\$75