

POSEIDON VINEYARD • 2016

“Primo’s Hill” Pinot Noir

Carneros, Napa Valley

TASTING NOTES: Briar, bramble and sweet plum aromas give way to undertones of rose petals and cinnamon-toasted oak. While bright and lively flavors of red plums and cherries expand on the palate, this wine has a dusty texture from sturdy tannins that hint at longevity in the bottle. The finish leaves savory hints of fennel seed, black licorice and cinnamon, kissed with a hint of earthy Carneros clay.

HISTORY: At our Poseidon Vineyard, originally planted in 1973, the maritime influence of the Carneros grape-growing season delivers cool, foggy mornings followed by warm days; ripening is nurtured slowly. At the center of our vineyard rises Primo’s Hill. Carneros soils began as the bed under San Pablo Bay; the silt of marine plants and animals, decomposing over time—and integrating with the finest particles of eroded rock—became clay. This darker and heavier soil comprises most of the vineyard land in Carneros, but as the Bay retreated and the drainage of Napa and Sonoma Valley cut through the clay, deposits of pebbles accumulated on the embankments. It is one such gravelly patch that is exposed on Primo’s Hill, allowing for better drainage and reduced soil compaction and resulting in deeper root penetration. The two-acre flanks of Primo’s Hill consistently produce our finest and most distinct Pinot Noir, which we capture in this reserve bottling.

VINTAGE 2016: The 2016 growing conditions were ideal in many ways. California received much needed rains in the winter with an El Niño season. The parched earth finally received moisture needed to replenish lakes, rivers and ponds which ultimately ripen healthy crops. Better set conditions at flowering resulted in increased yield compared to the 2015 vintage, which was alarmingly low for many vineyards in Northern California. Cooler conditions throughout the summer slowed down the pace of growth, increasing hang-time, allowing the vines to focus on flavor development. The moderate autumn weather allowed for a measured pace in the cellar throughout the long harvest, making for easier logistics and a happy cellar crew.

WINEMAKING: The band of soil that transitions between the upper and lower parts of Primo’s Hill is a gentle, pebble-and-gravel slope. It is here that the fruit for this special wine is farmed. Flavors develop fast on this “skirt,” and the fruit is concentrated with the classic essences of Pinot Noir. Lower yields and the higher skin-to-seed ratio provide the tannin backbone of the wine. The grapes are destemmed then fermented hot in small tanks for a quick extraction. While the juice is still warm and active, it is placed into new Kádár Medium Toast Plus barrels. These barrels are kept in the warmest part of the cellar to continue the fermentation process. This early transition to barrel is what distinguishes the flavor profile of this wine from its peers. The smoky, charry notes of the fresh oak barrels steep into the young wine and add to the savory, reductive aromas of this Pinot Noir. After 18 months in barrel, the wine is racked off the lees and bottled without fining or filtration.

Alex Beloz, Winemaker



WINE

Blend

100% Pinot Noir

Cooperage

100% Kádár Hungary,
15 Months in 100% New,
Medium Toast Plus Barrels

Chemistry

pH: 3.74
TA: 5.28 g/L
Alcohol: 14.4%

VINEYARD

Elevation

Sea Level to 45'

Clones

115 and 667

Year Planted

1973; Replanted in 1997

Vine Spacing

4' x 11'

Yield

1.9 Tons/Acre

Harvest Date

Sep 8, 2016–Sep 20, 2016