

Belle Glos

THE WORD BALADE, FRENCH FOR “WANDERING,” IS A FITTING TERM FOR OUR ANNUAL EXPLORATION OF SINGLE-VINEYARD PINOT NOIR BLOCKS ON THE WEST COAST. EACH VINTAGE, WE WILL BOTTLE ONLY THE MOST COMPELLING AND NUANCED EXPRESSION OF PINOT NOIR FROM A SINGLE SELECTED VINEYARD AND RELEASE IT AS A LIMITED BOTTLING, RESTAURANT-FOCUSED.

SINGLE VINEYARD SURVEY

During the 2019 growing season, one vineyard in the Santa Rita Hills AVA captivated us with its lovely fruit flavors, vibrant acidity, gorgeous color, and amazing complexity. For us, this vineyard expresses the exemplary qualities of its location in one of the coolest climates for cultivating Pinot Noir in California. The fruit offers small berries that are intensely flavored with dark-berry aromas.

THE 2019 GROWING SEASON

The winter of 2019 began with abnormally dry and warm weather through January. After this, a storm track established itself in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and directed much-needed precipitation into Southern California. The cool weather transitioned to sunny, warm, and dry weather in April, which caused rapid grapevine growth in early May. The arrival of warm weather in June and July caused bloom and fruit set to occur quickly. With the favorable weather conditions during bloom and fruit set, the crop sized up in a uniform manner. During the mild ripening weather in September, the fruit matured with beautiful flavor expression that was complemented by ripe tannins and exceptional color development. We started harvesting the fruit in mid-September with harvest finishing in the first week of October.

WINEMAKING

We harvested early in the morning so the fruit would arrive at the winery while the grapes were still cool to preserve their vineyard-fresh flavors. After destemming (but not crushing) the berries, we cold-soaked the must for 14 days to soften the skins and allow for ideal extraction. During fermentation in a combination of closed and open-top stainless steel fermenters, we used both punch-down and pump-over techniques to extract color and phenolics. We aged the wine in 100% French oak (60% new) for up to 12 months. After the wine underwent malolactic fermentation, we racked it twice before bottling.

TASTING NOTES

2019 BALADE PINOT NOIR

Santa Rita Hills

Santa Barbara County

Vibrant dark violet in color with aromas of blueberry cream crepes, toasty pie crust, melcocha and flan laced with bright yet black fruit. The entry is mouth-filling, and expansive then segues to a chalky firmness with rounded edges. Flavors of blackberry, huckleberry, plum, French toast, vanilla, nutmeg, and cinnamon. The finish lingers and acidity is perfectly balanced with notes of ripe but sour cranberry.

This is not anything like burgundy, yet a wine that defies tradition and has elevated the way Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir should taste.

To me, Balade is the expression of a specific place and a very definitive and memorable moment in time.

JOSEPH WAGNER
OWNER &
WINEMAKER

