

2013 PINOT NOIR

FE CIEGA SANTA RITA HILLS

326 CASES PRODUCED

Located on the very cool western side of Santa Rita Hills, Fe Ciega Vineyard (Spanish for blind faith) consistently produces profound pinot noir. I don't like to say I have favorites, but this vineyard is dear to my heart. With a fabulously complex aroma, dark color, and a huge impactful flavor, this wine is never shy. The difficulty making Fe Ciega has not been how to extract enough character from the grapes, but, instead how to fashion a wine of elegance.

It's not entirely a bad thing to have grapes with too much character; it's much easier to chisel away at the excess than to create more out of nothing. None-the-less it requires an attitudinal adjustment to realize that more is not always better, and I found that concept a stumbling block for decades. I always assumed that the winemaker should extract every last bit of character from the grapes, and to do less was a disservice to the vineyard. However, I can see now that extracting just the right amount enables a wine to be more harmonious and expressive.

So, faced with a vineyard that has an over-abundance of personality, I began to change the way we make Fe Ciega. We started with picking the grapes at lower sugar levels. Highly flavored wines taste so much better when they still have a spark of brightness, and by harvesting earlier more acidity is present in the grapes and that brings freshness.

We also made changes in the cellar. Fermentation creates heat and hotter ferments extract more from the grapes, so we have moved to reduce the maximum temperature we allow the fermentations to achieve. Additionally we have changed the number of "punch downs" (mixing the fermentation tanks) we do. In the old days I would insist on three mixings per day and that has been reduced to only one. These changes have dramatically altered the wine, it is now much more aromatic and flavors that were once heavy now dance on the palate.

BLEND 100% Pinot Noir
VINEYARD Fe Ciega
LOCATION Santa Rita Hills
ALCOHOL 13%
VINIFICATION 15% New French Oak
BARREL AGING 16 Months
TOTAL PRODUCTION 326 Cases

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