



# 2014 PINOT NOIR

## KESSLER - HAAK VINEYARD SANTA RITA HILLS

277 CASES PRODUCED

Called methode ancienne by some, making pinot noir with entire clusters of grapes, stems included, has been done for centuries. In the 1970's the famous Henri Jayer in Burgundy popularized using destemmed fruit to make a purer expression, but those stems in the ferment can add a dimension of complexity, both aromatic and textural, that sometimes elevates pinot to the profound.

I'd been hankering to make a pinot noir with a preponderance of whole clusters for some time, and our first effort in 2013 came from Bien Nacido using fruit from Block T's iconic clone 22 fruit. And while the wine was a brash success, I had ideas of how it could be better. I felt I needed a site that produced grapes with lots of acidity.

By coincidence, my son's drum teacher's wife's father had planted a vineyard right next door to Clos Pepe, a vineyard we worked with from 1999 through 2005. What was interesting about Clos Pepe was that the fruit always possessed an enormous amount of acidity, which kept the wine extra fresh. That sort of acidity is needed for wines made with whole clusters because the stems have a lot of potassium in them, and the potassium can cause an unwanted flabbiness if the acidity isn't sufficient. Another characteristic of Clos Pepe that was advantageous was that it had an intensely fruity character, and I imagined that the complexity that whole clusters can bring to a wine would be a perfect complement to that direct fruitiness. And being next door to Clos Pepe, I knew Kessler-Haak fruit would have a very similar profile.

For this wine, half was fermented 100% whole cluster and half was made with completely destemmed fruit. The results were startling. The whole cluster wine was softer in acidity, pleasantly pucker-y with tannins and generally quite herbal. The destemmed lot was zippy, fresh, fruity, but a little too straightforward and simple. Blended together the wine was sublime.

Showing some of the characteristics of maceration carbonique from the whole cluster fermentation (exuberant fruitiness), and the delicious mouth coating tannins from the stems, along with the distinct freshness from the Clos Pepe/Kessler-Haak location, this wine is stunning. And as eye grabbing as it is today it will age into a fabulously complex beauty during the next 10 to 15 years.

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**BLEND** 100% Pinot Noir

**VINEYARD** Kessler - Haak

**LOCATION** Santa Rita Hills

**ALCOHOL** 13%

**VINIFICATION** 10% New French Oak

**BARREL AGING** 16 Months

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