

2018 PINOT NOIR

KESSLER-HAAK STA. RITA HILLS

We started making Kessler-Haak Pinot Noir in 2014, with the intention of foraying into a more radical expression of Pinot Noir fermented with whole clusters (with the grapes left on their stems). A vineyard needs certain attributes to pull off that approach. You need a lot of inherent fruitiness. Stems add complexity but can also be sobering to fruit expression. When this vineyard came up as a possibility, we thought of our old Clos Pepe bottlings (grown adjacent) and decided this might be just the right vineyard to push the envelope with stem inclusion.

2018 was our coolest and latest harvest yet at Kessler-Haak, and this vineyard provided us outstanding fruit. The fragrance of this wine is powerful and stirring, with a real Californian thing going in its scents of bay laurel and flowering purple sage, along with berry medley and exotic spice aromatics. The palate is quite focused initially, with brisk purple red fruits channeled by stemmy tannins that evoke Earl Grey tea. With air it takes on more radiance along with suave and saline texture, and it carries on with great length into a savory finish.

This wine is super dynamic over a few hours of drinking. It's also quite structured and commanding of your attention. So, you might say this wine wants a couple more years of aging to jell further. This wine is surely a beguiling experience now though, and it is fantastic with any duck preparation.

BLEND 100% Pinot Noir

VINEYARD Kessler-Haak

APPELLATION Sta. Rita Hills

ALCOHOL 13.5%

VINIFICATION Open-top fermentation with 50% whole clusters

BARREL AGING 15 Months in French oak barrels, 44% new

TOTAL PRODUCTION 209 Cases

PRESS REVIEWS

Jeb Dunnuck

"I also loved the 2018 Pinot Noir Kessler Haak Vineyard, which has a more exotic, gamey, nutty character that fleshes out with air, showing beautiful red and black fruits, medium to full-bodied richness, a layered mouthfeel, and a great finish. This cuvée sees a touch more stems (50%) and it shows, so give bottles 2-3 years in the cellar. It's a gorgeous, complex Pinot Noir that will evolve for 10-15 years." **95 Points**

Antonio Galloni's Vinous

"The 2018 Pinot Noir Kessler Haak Vineyard offers an intriguing array of brambly notes and red berry fruit. Medium in body, with striking aromatics, the Kessler Haak has so much to recommend it. The 2018 is maybe not as obvious or direct as some of the other wines in this lineup, but it has tons of character. It's the sort of wine that reveals itself gradually, over time. It is also one of the more floral, savory wines in this range. The 2018 was done with 50% whole clusters, the most in the Ojai range." **94 Points**