



2021 PINOT NOIR KESSLER-HAAK STA. RITA HILLS

TASTING NOTE:

Our Kessler-Haak Pinot Noir is a gorgeous product of the exceptionally cool and windy 2021 vintage. The fruit was perfect at harvest, with ripe stems and high acidity, so we upped our whole-clusters in the fermentation to 70%. This bottling exudes Sta. Rita Hills with its profuse fragrance of lifted fruit. But there's also appealing sagey and piney chaparral-like aromatics, along with cherry pit and savory spice. Upfront on the palate the fruit is both succulent and brisk, with threads of currant and cranberry. Then fine astringencies of stemmy spice and black tea start to take hold, channeling the wine's energy into a long and textural finish with mouthwatering brightness.

This wine is strutting a lot on release, but there's an underlying nerviness that lends well to aging. We suggest decanting in the near-term and enjoying it with herby poultry dishes and roasted vegetables. Or age in a cool cellar for a decade; it will hit that in stride.

VINEYARD:

Kessler-Haak is planted in the northern half of the Sta. Rita Hills along Route 246, right next to Clos Pepe Vineyard where we farmed Pinot Noir throughout the early 2000s. The rows we farm include the Dijon clones 114 and 667.

We started making Pinot Noir from Kessler-Haak 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 they can also be sobering to a wine's sense of fruit. You also need fruit that carries a lot of acidity, because stems steep potassium into the must and can raise the pH significantly, putting you at risk of making a dull wine.

When this vineyard came up as a possibility for us, we thought of our old Clos Pepe bottlings. Those wines were brashly fruity and racy in their youth. We decided Kessler-Haak might be just the right vineyard to push the envelope with stem inclusion. This wine carries 70% whole-clusters beautifully. There's balance and freshness, with all sorts of botanical complexities swaddling the fruit richness.

BLEND 100% Pinot Noir

VINEYARDS Kessler-Haak

AVA Sta. Rita Hills

ALCOHOL 13.5%

VINIFICATION native yeast fermentation with 70% whole-clusters

BARREL AGING 16 months in 42% new French oak

TOTAL PRODUCTION 270 Cases

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