

BUTTONWOOD

Using grapes from family friends Art and Sherry Hibbits' vineyard, located on the far west side of the famed Sta. Rita Hills AVA, we sneak a 100% Pinot Noir into our portfolio.

This "Artists Series" Label

Delightful Ambiguities is a watercolor created in 2002. It reminds artist Seyburn Zorthian of jazz and rhythm and dance.

In the Vineyard

The Hibbits Ranch Vineyard is the most western vineyard in the Sta. Rita Hills appellation and an eclectic combination of clones, rootstocks and varietals. Father and son, Art and Gregg Hibbits, began planting the vineyard in 2001, added in more vines in 2003 and a few more in 2005. The vineyard is small (just about 2 acres), on a rather steep southwest facing hill with challenging soils of chert and clay. It would be impossible to keep clones and rootstocks separate from Hibbits Ranch, as there is quite a *mélange*. Rootstocks include 101-14, 1103-P, Freedom and own-rooted. The clonal selection boasts 777, 667, 114, 459, 828, swiss clone 2A, Pommard 4 and Sanford & Benedict field selection. This is a field blend that works in harmony!

The Vintage

"Challenging" is the nicest adjective that comes to mind. The growing season began with good growth that was then hit by three nights of extremely cold temperatures. With no inversion, this "frost" did not sink, and even the steep slopes and close proximity to the ocean at Hibbits could not move this cold air away from the vines. The second growth produced a much reduced crop, which then struggled to ripen with a much colder than normal summer. We harvested 1.64 tons of Pinot on October 3rd, almost a month later than normal.

Winemaking

The grapes were 100% de-stemmed directly into small open-top 1-ton fermenters, cold soaked for a few days to extract color and spiciness from the skins, and then inoculated with RC212 yeast. At the end of October, the young wine was gently moved into French Oak barrels (1 new 2011 Sirugue barrel, 1 neutral barrel) where malolactic fermentation occurred and the wine continued to age and gain complexity. The wine was racked only once prior to bottling a mere 24 cases in the summer of 2013. Vegan.

Technical Specifications: Alcohol: 14.5%, pH: 3.64, T.A.: 5.9 grams/Liter

Tasting Notes

The 2011 Pinot has taken some time to come around, but now our patience and efforts are rewarded! Visually, a very pretty, approachable wine with superb clarity and a deep, garnet color. Swirl, and swirl again – this release needs and likes some aeration! With some coaxing, brambly, blueberry and blackberry aromas start to emerge from the glass. A first sip delivers cola, blackcurrant and dark fruit notes. There's a hint of violet, soy and almost a dried meat/summer salumi note. Could that subtle briny note be from the nearby Pacific? Tannins are soft and the finish brings back the blueberry component. A lot of longevity in this wine – it hangs on for at least a day once opened.

Pairing idea

Mushroom risotto – Chanterelles if you can, as they're another Sta. Rita hills treat.

