

# EMERITUS

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## THE VINEYARDS OF EMERITUS

Emeritus Vineyards owns and farms 150 acres of Pinot Noir vineyards in two Sonoma County locations: The home ranch—Hallberg Vineyard—in the heart of the Russian River Valley, and William Wesley Vineyard in the coastal mountains of the Sonoma Coast. The sole objective of the Emeritus Team is to produce a *noble* Pinot Noir reflecting the *terroir* of each vineyard. Three factors will determine the quality of wine the Team will produce: soil, climate, and man. Soil gives the wine its character. Climate gives the wine its personality. Man, in addition to elevating the wine from grapes, influences the effects of both soil and climate, and thus, gives the wine its spirit, or style.

### HALLBERG VINEYARD, RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY



The Hallberg Vineyard is the home ranch of Emeritus Vineyards, which provides the fruit for the Emeritus, Russian River Valley cuvée. This stunning site bears the name of the former owners, Don and Marcia Hallberg, who in 1999, with aging apple trees past their prime, sold the 115-acre orchard to Emeritus Vineyards. With soils and climate ideal for growing Pinot Noir, the land was returned to vineyards after 65 years and the Hallberg name continues as a

hallmark of Russian River Valley agriculture

#### SOIL

*Soil gives the wine its character*

The California coast is an active geologic area with the Pacific Ocean plate diving under the North American plate over millions of years. This subduction has resulted in a haphazard jumble of marine sediment, volcanic, and metamorphic rock creating neighboring acre-sized parcels of land with substantially different soils. The two predominant soil types of the Russian River Valley Appellation are the Franciscan Complex and the Wilson Grove Formation. The Franciscan is the older of the two, 15–150 million years old, and is an agglomeration of sandstone, shale and serpentine. The Wilson Grove is a fine-grained sandstone formed 3–5 million years ago. It sits on top of the Franciscan Complex and as it breaks down, it forms a sandy loam called the Goldridge series.

Goldridge soils are composed of a tan topsoil of alluvial deposits from the Russian River sitting with an underlying gold layer of kaolinite clay. The topsoil provides nutrients and some moisture retention capability for the vines, while the clay limits vine vigor.

## **CLIMATE**

*Climate gives the wine its personality*

Although the Russian River Valley is defined by a geologic feature—a valley—it is the maritime fog intrusion in late summer and early fall that is the common characteristic uniting all parts of the appellation.

Rolling ridge-top vineyards are cooled by Pacific Ocean breezes which precede the marine layer of fog that cloaks the vineyards from late afternoon until mid-morning during the grape maturation period. This daytime “air conditioning” permits ideal growing-season temperatures, ripening the grapes slowly and in near-perfect balance. The nighttime fog cools the vineyards most nights to below 50°F., allowing the grapes to retain the acids that carry the flavors in the finished wine.

## **MAN**

*Man gives the wine its spirit*

The Emeritus Team’s practices in the vineyard and cellar influence the grape’s expression of its terroir. Actions taken are as important as those not taken. Experience determines which is which. Vineyard Manager Kirk Lokka utilized his 25+ years of farming experience in the Russian River Valley to oversee the development of the Emeritus vineyards from their infancy. He carefully matched clonal and rootstock selections to specific vineyard blocks, considering geographic, climatic and soil conditions.

High density planting decreases the spacing between the vines, forcing them to compete for nutrients and water. This struggle for survival reduces vine vigor, producing lower yields of small clusters. Additional cluster thinning at veraison (the beginning of the maturation period), sometimes up to 40% of the crop, as well as canopy management, focuses the vine’s energy to the remaining fruit, resulting in tiny berries with intense flavors. Dry farming helps the grapes achieve full physiological ripeness with all taste components in balance, with lower sugars and no dehydration.

Harvest at Emeritus begins at midnight when the grapes are in optimum condition. Hand picking chilled fruit preserves their flavors and natural acidity as they begin their journey into fermentation. Hand sorting selects only the highest quality grapes to be placed in small, wooden fermentation vats for cold soaking (which extracts flavors and colors), and fermentation. Manual punch-down of the cap of skins and seeds ensures gentle handling to preserve Pinot Noir's inherently delicate flavors. The wines are then placed in French oak barrels to complete fermentation. Barrel aging in a constant, low-temperature cellar with naturally high humidity allows the wines to develop slowly. Bottling takes place while the wines are still in their youth, before the wines lose their adolescent vibrancy and dry out due to extended barrel aging.