

EMERITUS VINEYARDS

E CLUB NEWS



As I write this, we are about to begin one of the earliest harvests on record. A heat wave in March started the growing season early, and we're seeing ripeness weeks ahead of schedule. It's a dramatic contrast to the cool, extended 2022 and 2023 vintages featured in this shipment. These wines show the intensity, elegance, and character that careful farming and our commitment to dry farming create in Pinot Noir. To help illustrate what makes these wines so special, I'd like to share a few of the vineyard practices that shape them long before harvest begins.

Pruning – Fall & Winter

While the vines are dormant, we carefully remove the previous year's growth. We tailor our pruning methodology to each block and clone, a process that requires experience and precision. Careful pruning manages the

vines' vigor and balances yields, producing fruit with greater concentration and character. Pruning is a true art. In Sonoma County, we even have a competition to recognize the most skilled pruners, and I'm proud to say our team has brought home that honor many times over the years.

Leafing – Summer

As the season progresses and the vines set their fruit, we begin leafing, which is the process of removing leaves from the vines by hand. Leafing requires skill and restraint. Remove too many leaves, and the fruit can get sunburned; remove too few, and you have the perfect environment for mildew. We aim for "dappled light" leafing, which is opening the canopy by removing interior leaves while leaving the larger guard leaves to protect the grapes from the afternoon sun. When done well, the fruit ripens evenly and develops excellent color without issue.

Thinning – Pre-Harvest

As harvest approaches, we selectively remove some clusters so the vine can focus its energy on the remaining fruit. This process produces wines with greater concentration, deeper color, and more complex flavors. As a farmer, it is hard to see part of our crop on the ground. Growers often joke that thinning is like dropping dollar bills in the vineyard, but we do this to have the highest quality fruit and wines. It's one of the most important investments we make in producing exceptional fruit.

These are just a few of the practices that are performed entirely by hand by our dedicated team. Their work is integral to growing great Pinot Noir, and the results are in every sip of the wines here at Emeritus. As you enjoy the wines, I hope you'll feel a stronger connection to the vineyards and the people who care for them throughout the year. Every bottle reflects thousands of thoughtful decisions in the vineyard, and we're grateful to share that with you. I hope to see you here at the ranch soon!

Cheers!

Riggs

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FEATURED FALL RELEASES

2022 Don's Block

Russian River Valley Estate Grown Pinot Noir

This wine is made in honor of our founding winemaker Don Blackburn. We feel this particular block has all the characteristics of Pinot Noir that Don loved. It's quiet and understated, but brimming with charm, Don's favorite descriptor. We farm Don's Block with extra care to achieve very low yields. This vintage has the classic aromas of dusty red cherry, blood orange, wilted rose petal, and a subtle hint of nutmeg. The flavors echo the nose, with layers of red cherry, citrus, and spice. The finish lingers with a graceful dusting of fine, powdery tannins that perfectly suit the wine's restrained, classic charm.

2023 La Combette

Russian River Valley Estate Grown Pinot Noir

La Combette is another of our single block wines, where we take extra care to farm. Like vintages past, this wine lures you in with a heady aromatic blend of blood orange, earthy clay, and hints of Chambord. It perfectly reflects the Emeritus spirit of achieving richness and elegance. On the palate, this wine is pure luxury, displaying an intensely plush, round mouthfeel; the hallmark of La Combette. It is easy to see why this section of vineyard deserves its own bottling; the wine is distinct yet familiar, and brimming with refined, powerful character.



2023 Hallberg Elite

Russian River Valley Estate Grown Pinot Noir

The Elite clone is like no other. The budwood was taken from Domaine de la Romanée Conti vineyard in Burgundy by our late Vineyard Manager Kirk. This wine comes from the top of the hill behind the winery and is farmed for very low yields. Both on the vine and in the glass the fruit is brimming with interesting flavors and aromas. Sweet clay, muddled blueberries, fresh rain, hibiscus flower, and rooibos tea. Its dense nature requires a bit of time to unfold, revealing juicy layers that command your attention. The wine is dynamic and flavorful, offering a refined, plush mouthfeel that is luscious yet balanced. The lengthy finish features a soothing tannin profile, like heavy satin fabric, suggesting that this wine is just beginning its long and beautiful evolution.

2023 Pinot Hill Elite

Sonoma Coast Estate Grown Pinot Noir

This block was planted with the same budwood used for our Hallberg Ranch Elite and sits on the west-facing slope of Pinot Hill. It receives a few hours of afternoon sun before being blanketed in thick fog for much of the remaining day. This brief sunlight is captured in the wine, bringing heady aromas of juicy pluot, hibiscus, blueberry confection, sandalwood, and a touch of Chambord. From start to finish, the wine is gorgeous, hedonistic, plush and dense, framed by persistent acidity.