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Oak Knoll Does it Again

June 22, 2009

Words are a poor substitute for describing a full blown sensual experience, whether that be great jazz, one's favorite opera, movie, food preparation, or . . . wine. It's so easy to take the easy route and use labels, especially with a wine like the 2006 Oregon Pinot Noir from Oak Knoll's Red Hill Vineyard. But it is an entity unto itself, for which its makers can be proud: Very Burundian, with those lush velours and elegance one expects from a good Burgundy. The Terroir may spell out California, but despite all the terra-hype, it's all in the making and all those little variables like weather, barrels, aging etc.

Well, long story short, This is a lovely wine that is a joy to sip and perfect to enjoy with food. This wine exhibits a dark garnet color and aromas of cherry, clove, and leather. On the palate the wine is supple and round with integrated flavors of berry and cinnamon spice, framed by subtle notes of vanilla and a hint of oak. The wine possesses a fruity fruit forward style ready to drink. Try it with grilled chicken, roast lamb, rare tuna and goat or triple crème cheese.

Red Hill Vineyard is a highly maintained vineyard operation, totaling 172 acres of hillside vineyard, situated on Red Hill in Northern Douglas County, Oregon. A seven acre vineyard was originally established in 1970 with plantings of Pinot Noir. Additional plantings were started in 1990.

The Vineyard is located with the recently designated AVA Red Hill of Douglas County, Oregon. This is a single vineyard appellation having south and southwest slopes with elevations between 880-1175 feet. This combination of the above factors allows for warm days and cool nights which are ideal for premium wine production. The Red Hill's geology

is an elongated volcanic dome with a reservoir of residual Jory soils to depths of 20 feet. Jory loam, Oregon's premier vineyard soil is well drained but quite infertile, resulting in small berry clusters with intense, ripe fruit flavors, displaying the uniqueness of the Red Hill AVA. Today the extensive plantings are developed with 132 acres of 6 different clones of Pinot Noir.

VINIFICATION

After 100% destemming, approximately 80% of berries were crushed. This is the third vintage for us of a new winemaking style. The must was moved to an open top ferment which releases CO2 faster to aireate the wine to enhance fermentation. The wine was left to cold soak for 1 week before fermentation to extract flavors from the skins, this brings out the fruity characters of the grape. After 1 week in the tanks the yeast was then added to begin fermentation. Two different styles of yeast were used, 60% fermirouge, which creates more body in the wine and 40% Ruby which intensifies the fruit flavors. The juice was pressed, settled, then racked into small French Oak cooperage. These subtle changes that our winemaker has made are to create a more approachable wine at an earlier age and decrease the hard tannin that our earlier vintages had, which can take years in the bottle to mellow. The winery relies primarily on Tonnellerie Remond and Francois Freres for its Pinot Noir barrels. These Burgundian coopers, along with Saury and Sansaud, are utilized to provide the winery with predominately medium-toast barrels from the Nevers, Allier, Borgogne, and Vosges forests.

Suggested Retail:\$24.99/bottle