



B. Kosuge Wines

2011 "The Habitat" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

Paul Sloan is a very good farmer. He farms several parcels for a diverse group of clients, all of them planted in the old world method of narrow rows and closely spaced vines. Some of the properties are farmed using biodynamic methods, although none are actually certified as such. Sophisticated, intuitive farming, exactly the kind of viticulture that I think suits my style of winemaking. In addition to managing vineyards, Paul makes a small amount of wine (both his viticulture and wine companies are called Small Vines, in honor of the high density planting that is his specialty), and I help him make his wine. In exchange for this, he provides me a small amount of fruit from two of the parcels he farms. A fair trade, all in all.

2011 was a hard year for the grape grower. It was damp and cool, requiring extreme vigilance with mildew control. Lots of leaf pulling, shoot straightening; you really needed to be on top of your game. And the crop was very small, so no margin for error. With high density plantings you need to be even more careful, as the closeness of the rows makes it quite laborious to control the various diseases that come during wet seasons. However, after all the heartache of the growing season, the resulting wines were superb—concentrated but graceful, aromatic and pure. The best Pinot Noirs of my career, in many cases. The 2011 Habitat was a little slow to show all of its charms. A bit tight in its youth, but it blossomed and filled out during aging and especially in the year or so it has been in bottle. How can a wine be both concentrated and light on its feet? Try a bottle and see. 56 cases made, \$45/bottle