



B. Kosuge Wines

2014 Hirsch Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

I wrote last year the 2013 was the earliest vintage of the 11 vintages I have worked with Hirsch Vineyard. Well, 2014 was even earlier! Early vintages, contrary to popular belief, are not necessarily hot years. Grapes have sort of an internal calendar, and once the season has been set in motion, the vines behave surprisingly the same from year to year. In other words, in an early year, the vines start growing early. But the time between the beginning of the season and harvest doesn't vary as much as you might think.

Having said all that, 2014 was a somewhat warmer season than 2013, especially towards the end. Slightly milder in the first half of the year, which was somewhat of a blessing in terms of the stress to the vines from the ongoing drought in California. The warmer finish of the season is reflected in the riper, showier nature of the wines. All of my 2014 Pinot Noirs were more forward than their 2013 counterparts at every stage, and certainly early on they seemed to be among the very best wines I had made in the last several years. Time will tell if that assessment proves to be correct, of course.

As with the 2013 Hirsch, this wine is a barrel selection of those which in my opinion were most "Hirsch-like" and expressive. They tend not to be the new barrels, although there is a very small portion of new oak in the 2014. Mostly they are the barrels that show the greatest clarity and purity of flavor.

My wines always need a little air to open up, and they often show their best six months to a year after release. I like this, to be honest—wine should evolve and change and I like wines that are wound up and maybe not quite ready when they are young. It's fun to watch them unfold both in the glass, and with a little time in the cellar. Right now, the 2014 Hirsch is brighter than the 2013, with a hint of "grapiness" that is very typical of the 2014 vintage. Like all my other 2014 Pinots, there's an appealing tension between ripeness and energy that I quite like.

125 cases