



B. Kosuge Wines

2014 "The Shop" Carneros Pinot Noir

I have said many times that I feel that California wine, especially Pinot Noir, ages quickly and is quite fragile, more so than its old world counterparts. With that in mind, I have been rethinking how I handle the fruit, from grape all the way to the bottle and to a limited extent, even after it is bottled. Right now, however, my focus is on the aging and finishing of the wine. For the last three or four years, I have incorporated different vessels into the aging regime of all my wines, in an effort to be more protective and conservative with the wine during the time in the cellar. The most noticeable change has been the use of concrete vats for a portion of the aging. California Pinot Noir, when aged in concrete, is less broad and complex than it is when aged in oak, but it is brighter, fresher and more energetic. And, of course, it does not pick up any wood flavor. Blending the two wines, if you get the percentages correct, gives you wine that has the best of both worlds.

The 2014 Shop is made up of about 20% wine aged in concrete and 80% wine aged in oak. The oak aged portion is in mostly older cooperage, with only about 20% of the barrels new. I find this to be a pretty good combination, although I am sure different vintages will require slightly different treatment. This is what is so fun about making wine, the constant exploring and adjusting. It never gets boring if you keep an open mind.

2014 was a good year for Pinot Noir in the North Coast of California. It was an early vintage and fairly ripe in character, but with enough freshness and acidity that the wines are lively. They seem pretty approachable young, more so than the brooding 2013s were. The 2014 Shop is brighter and more juicy than the 2013 or the 2012 for that matter. As the vines at The Shop mature (they were planted 16 years ago), the flavors are becoming deeper and, curiously, the fruit seems to demand a lighter hand with extraction. Since I value flavor over size, I am happy to oblige. 347 cases.