



B. Kosuge Wines

2007 Manchester Ridge Mendocino Pinot Noir

I have long admired the wines of the cooler parts of Mendocino County, like the Anderson Valley, for their “lightness” (by that I don’t mean light bodied) and perfume. They seem to dance across the tongue, especially the Pinot Noirs, without sacrificing richness or body, which seems to me to be the definition of great Pinot Noir. The wines from Manchester Ridge are somewhat more sinewy than their counterparts from down in the Anderson Valley. Incidentally, Manchester Ridge is too far out towards the coast and too high in elevation to be called Anderson Valley, which is why I use the appellation Mendocino instead. 2007 was a difficult year at Manchester Ridge. The spring was cold and rainy, and the vines set very little fruit. On top of that, the season was cool and late so I was definitely wringing my hands about getting it in before the end, even with the tiny crop. When we brought the fruit to the winery I felt that the ripening was not as uniform as I’d like—sort of the opposite of the beauty queen clusters in 2006—so we slowed the sorting table way down, had a cup of strong coffee and set to a very careful selection of only the ripest fruit. After a pretty grueling two hours on the sorting line, what went into the fermentation tank was actually riper than the 2006. And at a little over 1 ton to the acre, there is plenty of concentration. There are some of the same pretty floral and spice notes that the 2006 had, but the wine is darker and a bit richer on the mid palate than the very successful 2006. And with the raciness and freshness that, in my relatively short experience with the vineyard, seems to be the hallmark of Manchester Ridge. Unfortunately there isn’t quite as much of it. 240 cases.