



B. Kosuge Wines

2014 "The Habitat" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

2014 will always be remembered in the north coast as the year of the earthquake. It was not a terribly large one, by numerical standards—6.0 on the Richter scale—but it was centered less than 6 miles from my house. I can tell you that it was the most violent shaking I have ever felt, accompanied by a terrible rumbling noise, flashing lights (it's strange but when the earth moves, light bulbs flash on and off. It happened in the 2000 earthquake too) and the sound of breaking glass downstairs.

Miraculously, no wine was lost at the winery and only a few bottles broken in the warehouse where I store my wine. A few days later, while we were still picking up the pieces, harvest began. My first grapes came in on August 29 and by September 3, all of my Pinot Noir was picked! I was a bit distracted to say the least but could see that the quality potential was high, even as the fruit came across the sorting line. Making wine was soothing, actually, especially as it was apparent right away that it was going to be a good year.

2014 was the first time since 2008 that The Habitat came from a single vineyard. Starting in 2012, The Habitat has been comprised of equal parts Baranoff Vineyard and Barlow Homestead vineyard but as the Barlow Homestead has come into full production, it has become the sole source of fruit for this bottling. That's how special I think this fruit is. There are several blocks at Barlow but the largest are planted to old Californian selections Swan and Calera. Turns out those guys knew what they were doing when they chose that plant material, as it is eminently well suited to the coastal Californian climate. At Barlow, they both produce vibrant, pure, concentrated wines that, to my palate, redefine what Californian Pinot Noir can be.

I used only a small percentage of new oak to age this wine. One out of five barrels, to be exact. While the fruit can "take" more new oak, I wanted to keep distractions to a minimum, and really let the fruit and the site show through. At this stage, the wine is still a bit tight but it already shows plenty of red fruit, spice and a dash of herbs (I used a lot of whole clusters in the fermentation). I love its energy.

101 cases, \$45/bottle

