



B. Kosuge Wines

2017 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

2017 was a challenging year to be a grapevine. Even before the devastating fires of the fall of 2017 (which came after early varieties like Pinot Noir and Chardonnay were already harvested) the season was marked by extremes—wet in the winter, hot in the summer, cool in August and blisteringly hot in September. Some regions, like Carneros and the Santa Lucia Highlands, seemed to weather this pretty well. Others, like the Sonoma Coast, felt it a bit more. While the wines I made from the Sonoma Coast came through the heat remarkably well, I did not feel they were up to the standards of their 2015 and 2016 counterparts. So I made the somewhat painful decision to bottle everything as Sonoma Coast. No Hirsch, no Habitat.

What do I mean by “come through the heat remarkably well?” I’ve been making Pinot Noir for more than thirty years, and as we all know it is a delicate grape. Heat, especially in the last week or two on the vine, can cook the freshness and perfume out of the grapes, giving them a cooked fruit character which some like but I do not. That was my fear with my Sonoma Coast sites. What happened instead was the heat stalled the ripening and so when I picked, perhaps erring on the side of early because I was afraid of raisiny flavors, the fruit was not fully ripe. But it seemed like a good tradeoff to pick a little too soon and not get raisins. So the wines were aromatic and true to type, with very little cooked or overripe flavors, but they were just a bit “smaller” than they would otherwise be.

Having said all that, the Sonoma Coast blend has much to offer. It reminds me a little of my 2013 Sonoma Coast in that it has pretty aromatics and is fairly tightly wound. It is a compact wine, modest in alcohol for a wine from a hot vintage, low on oak but high on Pinot Noir fruit. The kind of wine you can drink for pleasure without straining the pocketbook too much. Nothing wrong with that!

120 cases, \$30/bottle