



## **2004 PINOT NOIR Grand Cuvee** *Santa Rita Hills*

### **Winemaker's Notes:**

In the December 2004 Issue of the *Wine Enthusiast*, editor Steve Heimoff wrote a column called 'The State of the Grape.' It was a year end, mini-mega trend synopsis for various wine grape varieties. Regarding Pinot Noir he wrote, "there is a regrettable tendency toward heavy Pinots. Congratulations to vintners, mainly in the South-Central Coast, who are successfully bucking the trend." Well, Steve, we are in the South-Central Coast, but I don't think 2004 in our district was the year for us to buck that trend. Excuse me, but my 2004 Grand Cuvee Pinot is, dare I say, *huge*. In fact, with the concentration in the Pinots now coming out of the Santa Rita Hills, I'm not so sure this new appellation will ever be good at bucking this *bigness* trend.

In 2004 we had a tremendous heat wave during the Pinot harvest. Grapes that were hanging on the vines at 21-22 degrees Brix on one day quickly found themselves at 25° Brix the next day. As sugars shot through the roof we scrambled, along with the rest of the County, to get all the Pinot picked. By the time it was over, we saw lots of grapes coming in at 27-28° Brix, and we heard plenty of stories about wineries looking at 30°+ brix fruit. Suffice it to say, ripeness in 2004 was not a problem.

So how's this wine? Well, all the things that come from really ripe grapes are definitely present; 14%+ alcohol, sweet cherry extraction, and a fat luxurious mouth feel. But even with all its girth, the wine has just enough acidity to hold everything together. Aromatically, there is definitely some of the herb and spice that is typical in our estate fruit, but with the richness of this wine, combined with the big chunk of toasty French oak; right now it smells more like a fresh baked cherry pie.

I'm sorry Steve, but there's noth'n wrong with that.

### **Technical Notes:**

#### VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

100% Pinot Noir, Babcock Estate, Santa Rita Hills

#### VINIFICATION

pH: 3.78      TA: 6.8 g/L      RESIDUAL SUGAR: Dry      ALCOHOL: 14.5 %

BOTTLING DATE: August 2005

RELEASE DATE: Winter 2005

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 829 cases 750ml; 56 cases 1.5 Liter