



2007 PINOT NOIR "OCEAN'S GHOST"

Estate Grown – Santa Rita Hills

Every year I try to think of something different to say about this wine. I always start by reading last year's notes just for context. My problem is, every time I read the following, it still sounds so right on:

While a good part of the magic in the Ocean's Ghost section of our ranch consists of the marriage between soil and climate, we match these existential gifts with a radicalism in our farming that is restrained by nothing. I have worked over the years with many vineyards, some of them good, some of them great. In almost every case, at some point along the way I will find myself thinking, "If only the grower would have done this or that, it would be just a little better." And a lot of times it's not that the grower isn't amenable to it. It's just that I am not there on a day to day basis to say, "Okay, NOW!; *now* is when we should leaf pull; *now* is when we should cluster thin." Well, with Ocean's Ghost, it is not unusual for me to start my day there. If something needs tweaking, I drive by the shop and check in with my vineyard manager Rance Minyard. Of course I always find a number of things that need attention, but when it's in the Ghost, Rance knows exactly where to put it on the list of priorities. In fact, half the time he beats me to it. While everything can't be *perfect* all of the time, when you put the words *Optimum Quod Possum** on your label, it's good to have at least a few avenues where you can practice your best regardless of the cost. For me, Ocean's Ghost is one of them.

This year's big effort actually took place in the cellar as much as it did in the vineyard. For starters, we decided to carry this wine a full 16 months in barrels so that some of its dissolved CO₂ could exit its way out of those barrels. The problem was that while the CO₂ was leaving, a few infectious critters were arriving. There are a number of pesky little yeast and bacteria that love to grow in the barrels of finished red wines. If you find them quickly enough, you can deal with them. If not, they can take the attractive edge off of a wine. In this case, they were astutely found by our winemaker, Ron Hill. To make a long story short, we looked at this wine and discussed our strategy with it almost everyday for the last month of its stay in barrels. Thank you Ron.

The wine is big, as you might expect, and it's really stunning this year how solid the core of fruit is, even in a wine that is 50%ish new French Oak. While it is rich enough to enjoy now with beef or pork, based on the way the '04 is drinking, this stuff should be singing in about 4 years. Even if you give it just a few months to settle down in the bottle, I think you will be well rewarded. As far as supply goes, if you want to pull the cork on this first bottle, just to get the lay of the land on one of the most earthy, foresty, cherried-out-holly-grail Pinots you have ever tasted, have no fear; you will be able to get more. Unlike the Déjà Vu, with which there is just **no** wine available outside of your Terroir Exclusives bottle, I was able to make an extra 200 cases or so of this wine. I don't know if it will still be available this time next year, but with it only being available to the club and few select restaurants, I suspect we will have a few cases in stock through the summer.

Is it just me, or is this one a little longer in the finish than its predecessors?

Bryan

Babcock

WINERY & VINEYARDS

Technical Notes:

VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

100% Pinot Noir, Babcock Estate, Santa Rita Hills

VINIFICATION:

16 months barrels age, 50% new French oak

STATISTICS:

pH: 3.50 TA: 6.9 g/L RESIDUAL SUGAR: Dry ALCOHOL: 14.3%

BOTTLING DATE: February 2009

RELEASE DATE: February 2009

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 385 cases 750ml

* *Optimum Quod Possum*: Latin for "As best as I am able."