

**Bondi Home Ranch**  
**PINOT NOIR**

*In the late 1800's Paolo Antoni Bondi left his small stone village high in the green Tuscan mountains of Fivizzano, eventually making his way to the small countryside town of Sebastopol, California. Water Trough Road, which runs along the eastern end of the property, is so named for the horse trough that once sat in the low vale where, 100 years ago, horses pulling buggies stopped to water. Just below this narrow dirt road is where Paolo planted a field of potatoes and in the course of just one year had made enough money to buy the farmhouse and the surrounding acres of apple orchard from his boss. Once settled, Paolo sent money back to Italy so his bride, Gemma, and their 3 year old daughter, Alma, could join him and here they stayed to farm for the remainder of their lives.*

*A little known Eden for Burgundian varietals is the Green Valley appellation, which nestles amongst the lush green folds of the Russian River Valley and has a significant coastal influence. The cool breeze from the sea rises in the late afternoon, skimming along the distant bank of fog, relieving the vines from the afternoon heat, thus slowing the ripening process. Black berries lie thick in great thorny bushes throughout Green Valley and along the coast. Seeing how prolific the berry vines were, Lee reasoned this would be great territory for Pinot Noir. As the market for apples in Sonoma County grew unbearably soft, Lee Sr., decided to make the transformation from apples to grapes. Surrounding his grandparent's old farmhouse, Lee planted the vineyard in 4 separate blocks, establishing three different Dijon clones onto a de-vigorating rootstock. Densely planted at 2,000 vines per acre, the fruit hangs 28 inches above ground on a vertical trellis system. Eastern exposure compliments the vines growth and even ripening with all day sun. The apple trees here typically blossomed sooner than the orchards in the Russian River Valley, but took longer to ripen. This has proved true for the grapes also. The bud break is earlier but the fruit ripens later due to the cooling in the afternoons.*

*The grapes are picked between 25 and 26 degrees brix to ensure mature ripe fruit flavors. They are hand selected at harvest time by Lee Martinelli, who tastes the grapes and chooses when to pick according to the developed concentration of flavors in the berries. After picking, the whole berries undergo a long cool fermentation to generate skin contact and expose fruit character and are fermented with wild yeast. The juice is gravity fed into small oak barrels with a touch of residual sugar remaining to complete the fermentation process in barrel until dry. It rests in 75% new French oak on its gross lees for one year. Being a particular and moody varietal to tamper with, the grapes, juice, and then wine are minimally handled. This wine is neither heat nor cold stabilized and is unfinned and unfiltered.*

*Wine Maker: Helen Turley*

*Asst. Wine Maker: Bryan Kvamme*

**The Bondi Home Ranch Pinot Noir in the Press**

2000 Vintage ~ 92 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr.

2001 Vintage ~ 90 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr.

2002 Vintage ~ 90+ pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 90+ Stephen Tanzer

2003 Vintage ~ 93 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr.

*"The 2003 Bondi Home Ranch Pinot Noir displays the darker, more primordial side of Pinot Noir with its plums, figs, and earthy black fruit nose. It actually comes from a relatively cool climate site in the Green Valley, and the result is a distinctive, spice-driven, exotic style of Pinot Noir that will no doubt be somewhat controversial. I would drink it over the next 5-7 years."*