

BLUE SLIDERIDGE
PINOT NOIR

Blue Slide Ridge is named for its magnificent formations of blue rock. Directly below the vineyard a sheer cliff drops into the small winding creek, the south fork tributary of the Gualala River, showing off great cerulean shards jutting out from beneath the earth's surface. This vineyard site was nearly named "Rattle Snake Ridge" due to the large population of rattlers that populate the cool hollows beneath the great blue rocks. In 1995 my parents, Lee and Carolyn Martinelli, planted this 6 acre vineyard of Pinot Noir on a steep slope which was once prime grazing land for sheep. This small vineyard was planted to the specifications of our winemaker, Helen Turley and her husband John Wetlaufer. The vines are on a vertically trained trellis system with the fruit hanging between 24 and 28 inches above the ground. To aid in early ripening we have adopted this old European practice of utilizing the sun's heat reflected from the ground. This style of lower trellising is more labor intensive to farm but the benefits out way the expense. The vineyard consists of 2,000 vines per acre which are spaced meter by 2 meters apart. Each vine yields about 3 pounds of fruit compared to the earlier standard plantings, 10x12 feet apart, which may yield a heavy crop of 20 to 30 pounds. The denser spacing creates more intense flavor in the grapes because each individual vine is asked to focus more attention onto a fewer number of grape clusters. This vineyard is truly a "coastal" vineyard, being located on the second ridge inland from the Pacific coastline.

After picking, the grape clusters are de-stemmed and the whole berries undergo a long cool fermentation, with indigenous yeast, to generate skin contact and extract fruit character. 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 is then allowed to rest and mature in 75% new French oak on its gross lees for 10 months without interruption. The grapes, juice, and then wine are minimally handled.

Winemaker: Helen Turley

Asst. Winemaker: Bryan Kvamme

The Blue Slide Ridge Pinot Noir in the Press

1997 Vintage ~ **90+ pts. Stephen Tanzer**

1998 Vintage ~ **90-92 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr.**

1999 Vintage ~ **91+ pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 92 pts. Stephen Tanzer**

2000 Vintage ~ **93 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 93 pts. Stephen Tanzer**

2001 Vintage ~ **93 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 93 pts. Stephen Tanzer ~ 93 pts. Wine Spectator**

2002 Vintage ~ **96 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 94 pts. Stephen Tanzer ~ 94 pts. Wine Spectator**

"The spectacular 2002 Blue Slide Ridge (450 cases) is a prodigious effort boasting a deep blue/purple color as well as a luxurious bouquet of acacia flowers intermixed with black raspberries, blueberries, and sweet cherries, all underpinned with striking minerality. Full-bodied, with a multidimensional as well as multilayered palate, great persistence, and tremendous purity, it is one of those singular wines that, once you identify its characteristics, you can always locate it in a blind tasting. It will provide immense pleasure over the next 7-8 years. "

96 pts. ~ Robert M. Parker, Jr.

"A smooth, rich, multifaceted Pinot with layers of fruit complexity and a long, persistent finish ending with supple tannins. The core flavors feature zesty ripe plum, raspberry and blackberry (with a hint of jam) and a touch of strawberry rhubarb pie. Drink now through 2009." 94 pts. ~ James Laube