

“Bella Vigna”
PINOT NOIR

The fruitful Russian River Valley is filled with Edens for growing Pinot Noir. Gardens of vinifera are dotted throughout this lush valley, resplendent in their supreme capability to produce exquisite wine. These delightful paradises are exactly where our vineyards have been planted. The “Bella Vigna” Pinot Noir is a select blend of some of these plantings.

These small vineyards were planted to the specifications of Helen Turley and John Wetlaufer. The vines are trained on a vertical 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 end result outweighs the expense. The vineyard is densely planted, consisting of 2,000 grapevines per acre, each vine spaced meter by meter apart. Each vine yields between 2 to 3 pounds of fruit, compared to the earlier typical plantings, 10x12 feet apart, which may yield 20 to 30 pounds of grapes. 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. (Similar to the idea of smaller classroom sizes.)

The grapes are picked between 25 and 26 degrees brix and are hand selected at harvest time by Lee Martinelli Sr., who walks through the vineyard and tastes them. The fruit samples are then brought to the winery lab where wine maker Helen Turley tastes the juice and decides when to pick according to the concentration of flavors. After picking, 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. The finished wine is unfinned, unfiltered, neither cold nor heat stabilized and contain naturally occurring sediment. We recommend decanting or allowing the bottle to sit upright in a cool place prior to serving. Salute!

Wine Maker: Helen Turley

Assistant Wine Maker: Bryan Kvamme