

Zio Tony Ranch
PINOT NOIR

The "Zio Tony Ranch" is named after my father's uncle whom was the first in the Bondi family to be born on American soil. Zio Tony was the son of Paolo Antoni Bondi and Adele Gemma Cardellini, who emigrated from Italy in the late 1800's, and immediately set up farming potatoes. In one year they saved enough money raising potatoes to purchase the apple ranch on which Tony was born and where he and his sister, Alma, were raised. Zio Tony, Zio meaning 'uncle' in Italian and pronounced 'tseo', was a very charismatic man with a big booming voice whom loved a good time. His big handsome smile is still legendary in the old farming community of western Sonoma County. He was the entrepreneur of the family and began buying individual properties and planting apple trees, eventually establishing the largest apple orchard in the county. When Tony passed away in 1969 his nephew, Lee Martinelli, Sr., inherited the estate. The love of his family's heritage land was too great for my father to sell the property and in one short season Lee went from High School teacher to Apple Farmer.

The market for apples in Sonoma County eventually grew unbearably soft and the Zio Tony Ranch has gradually made the transformation from apples to grapes. Keeping with our family heritage we have preserved a large grove of the old thick-trunked Gravenstein apple trees. Bursting with flavor, the Grav's are the best in the world for baking and eating. Surrounding this acreage of ancient fruit bearing trees Lee Sr., has planted Chardonnay and Pinot Noir which are varietals that glorify in this particular climate's warm/cool temperatures. The vines are planted on rolling hills, are densely spaced at 2,000 per acre with clones '115', 'Quail Hill', '548', and '95', and rootstocks, '420', '101-14' and '3309'. This small vineyard is trained on a vertical trellis system with the fruit hanging just 24 inches above the ground. The grapes are thinned down to only 3 pounds of fruit per vine. These practices all insure mature fruit flavors in the wine as well as even ripening.

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, Sr. and Helen Turley who taste the grapes and choose 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 Assistant Wine Maker: Bryan Kvamme

Zio Tony Ranch Pinot Noir in the Press

2000 Vintage ~ 90 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 90 pts. Stephen Tanzer

2001 Vintage ~ 90-92 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 91 pts. Stephen Tanzer

2002 Vintage ~ 93 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 92 pts. Stephen Tanzer ~ 93 pts. Wine Spectator

2003 Vintage ~ 94 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr. ~ 93pts. Wine Spectator

"... big perfume of jammy strawberries, cherries, rose petals, and earth. The wine offers impressive fruit, medium to full body, and a beautiful, voluptuous palate and long finish. This is impossible to resist, although I think the wine has enough structure and depth to age nicely for at least a decade." 94 pts. Robert M. Parker, Jr

“Wonderful aromas of wild berry, plum and black cherry are joined by light vanilla and toasty oak scents that offer a delightful olfactory treat. Silky smooth, the flavors glide across the palate, picking up delicious raspberry, huckleberry and boysenberry flavors. Drink now through 2007.” James Laube