



Sea Smoke Vineyard and Viticultural Profile

Sea Smoke's special vineyard site with its high altitude, southern exposure, rich clay soils, low crop yields and the unique microclimate of the Santa Ynez River canyon, possesses the ideal conditions for growing premium Pinot Noir.

Located in the Santa Rita Hills appellation of Santa Barbara County, our vineyard site is unique because it falls in one of the only east-west coastal ranges in the United States. The coastal ranges of the western hemisphere generally run north to south, keeping the cool marine fog layer over the Pacific Ocean from reaching the warm interior valleys. However, on occasion, California's coastal range is dramatically interrupted by geographic features that allow this marine fog layer to wash over ideally situated vineyard land. One such interruption of the coastal range is the Santa Ynez River canyon, which borders the Santa Ynez Mountains and winds its way westward, eventually spilling into the Pacific Ocean. Flanked to the north by the Santa Rita hills, and to the south by the Santa Rosa hills and Santa Ynez range, this canyon acts as a funnel, drawing a layer of marine fog over some of the best Pinot Noir land in the world.

Our south-facing vineyards are planted on hillside bluffs, with elevations ranging from 350 to 650 feet, and thus benefit from excellent daylong sun exposure – a crucial factor in optimum flavor and tannin development. Moderating this natural abundance of sunshine, the afternoon's marine fog layer is funneled in from the coast through the Santa Ynez River canyon, cooling the vineyard and resulting in a longer ripening period. This extended hangtime allows the flavors and tannins of Pinot Noir to fully develop prior to harvest.

Sea Smoke's vineyard blocks are located in hillside "buckle" zones. These sloping "buckle" zones are characterized by soils deposited over time by the erosion and weathering of the nearby peaks. In these unique areas, rich Gazos, Lopez and Botella clay soils remain shallow, an essential quality for reducing vigor and creating smaller clusters of grapes with higher intensity of flavor.

To achieve a broad palette of flavors for blending in the winery, we have planted 10 top-quality, low vigor French clones – including: 777, 667, 2a, 115, 113, 228, 05, 459, 09 and 16. We achieve partial vigor reduction naturally from the shallow clay soils on our hillsides (some of which have 30 percent slopes). Additional vigor reduction is achieved by using carefully selected rootstocks. While we employ the latest technology in the vineyard to help us achieve vine balance and vigor reduction, we also recognize that technology is no replacement for skilled people. Every one of our vines receives personal handling from our vineyard crew seven to eight times each year.

We meticulously farm and manage our vineyard, striving for low crop yields and vine balance. Specifically, we work to identify variability within vineyard blocks and then modify our farming practices accordingly. Because people recognize block-to-block and plant-to-plant variability more easily than machines do, our highly trained team is our biggest asset in our quest for world-class quality. The hand operations which our vineyard team performs, on *each vine, every year* include: suckering and shoot thinning, basal leaf removal, cluster thinning (post fruit set), vertical shoot positioning (two to three times), green drop (the elimination of clusters with 50 percent or more green berries at 80 percent veraison) and wing/shoulder removal on remaining clusters, additional pre-harvest green drop, and harvesting by block and by clone.

To further control variability within our vineyard, we have mapped each of our vineyard blocks using GIS (global information system) referencing equipment. This information is combined with GIS referenced soil data, tissue sample data and vigor-maps (using infrared photography) to produce detailed management maps of our vineyard. Using this data, we have created special management zones (in addition to our 26 vineyard blocks) where we are able to micro-manage areas of irregularity in our vineyard. The end result is a more uniform vineyard and an ability to harvest at optimal maturity in each part of the vineyard, further increasing wine quality.

Managed deficit irrigation is employed to keep vine vigor low, berry size small and quality at a maximum. In conjunction with our on-site weather stations (which upload data to the web every 30 minutes) we take twice-weekly water status measurements in every block using soil moisture probes, pressure bomb, and visual observation. We combine this data to determine the exact amount of water to apply (via our drip irrigation system) to each block in order to achieve the desired vine water stress.

At Sea Smoke, we recognize the importance of acting as responsible stewards of the land and, accordingly, began participating in the California Association of Winegrape Growers' Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Practices in 2003. This code is a voluntary, self-assessment program, which aids us in setting targets and monitoring achievement of our sustainable farming goals. In addition, we began cultivating a special 12-acre block of our vineyard using biodynamic practices in 2005. To date, this experiment has been extremely successful and has currently been expanded to 80 acres.

For an interactive breakdown of our 26 vineyard blocks (including clones, soil, rootstock and acreage) please visit our website at www.seasmoke.com.