

QUARTERLY NEWS



NEW GROWTH, NEW WINES

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While the vines are still enjoying their winter nap at the moment (dormancy), there are some signs of spring in Sonoma County. First... the mustard is in bloom. Mustard blossoms are always early, and those vineyards who farm organically are rewarded with a beautiful carpet of yellow flowers. (keep an eye out for this - if you're in the area, you'll see some vineyards with bare dirt between the rows while others are full of life, flowers, and buzzing insects. Can you guess who sprays and who doesn't?) They'll grow to waist high by April and be joined by chamomile, fava bean blossoms, sweet peas and more by then. It's a sight to behold! (and a great time for a vineyard tasting)

Along with spring, there's **new growth in the Gros Ventre wine portfolio** - for the first time in 12 years, we're releasing a new vineyard designate Pinot Noir (something we haven't done since we released the 2011 Campbell Ranch Pinot back in 2013). Some of you no doubt remember the wines we made from the stunning Cerise Vineyard, which we lost when it was sold to Duckhorn when they acquired Kosta Brown in 2018. Since then, we've been looking to find a Pinot vineyard that lives up to those standards. We were overjoyed when we found Little Creek Vineyard, situated in our favorite hamlet of Annapolis on the West Sonoma Coast. We're thrilled to be introducing the first vintage of our 2023 Little Creek Pinot Noir.

Call us crazy (two new wines at once!) but we've also introduced our first Gamay Noir blend (going by the name of Less Traveled), which we're delighted to be sharing with you.

In case you missed it -- in January, we poured our new vintages for Antonio Galloni (Vinous), who just published his reviews, saying...

"This is a terrific set of new releases from Chris and Sarah Pittenger. The 2023 whites and reds both convey the bright, translucent style that is such a signature of the house. One of the most distinctive wines in the range is the High Country Red, a blend of Gamay and Pinot Noir. Speaking of Pinot, the 2022s are gorgeous wines that capture the best the vintage had to offer."

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The New Wines

2023 LESS TRAVELED GAMAY

Our first-ever Gamay blend, this wine has been in the making since we got our first couple of tons of Gamay in 2016. In this bottle comes together some of the top Gamay vineyards in the state. We love expressing terroir through site in our Pinot and Gamay, but this wine shows that the sum is often greater than its parts. Antonio Galloni (Vinous) describes it this way: "The 2023 Gamay Noir Less Traveled is a blend from Nolan, Barsotti and Las Cimas. Silky, elegant and wonderfully polished, the 2023 is such a classy wine. Crushed flowers, cedar, mint, pipe tobacco and crushed small berries all grace this exquisite Gamay from Gros Ventre. A touch of savoriness from the 33% stems lingers." Pair with poultry, seafood, vegetarian dishes, and pizza (particularly mushroom). Drink now through 2031.

\$34

2023 LITTLE CREEK PINOT NOIR

This exciting new (to us) vineyard was planted to clones 115 & 777 in 2001 and has been organically farmed since day one. It is a tiny 2.4 acre vineyard nestled amongst coastal pine & redwood trees in the secluded hamlet of Annapolis. Though only a mile from Campbell Ranch as the crow flies, the journey between the two properties takes 30 minutes, a testament to the region's extreme nature. Vineyards are scarce in this coveted area, making fruit from these rugged coastal hills a rare find.

This limited bottling showcases delicate aromatics of raspberry preserves, rose petals, orange peel, and sweet spices. On the palate, it's polished and supple, embodying the elegance and purity of the 2023 vintage. For this inaugural vintage, we produced just a single barrel, with some of the fruit also finding its way into our most sought-after wines, including First Born. Pair with roasted chicken, salmon, mushroom-based dishes, creamy cheeses like Gruyère, prosciutto, duck, and delicate lamb cuts. Drink now through 2035. \$72

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2024 VERMENTINO

The 2024 Vermentino once again hails from the Barsotti Vineyard in El Dorado, where we also source Gamay. This vintage marked a return to "normal," with harvest beginning in September rather than October, as it did in 2023. This high-elevation vineyard was picked on September 17th—an entire month earlier than the previous vintage, and is similar in style to our earlier renditions.

The 2024 vintage opens with vibrant orchard-driven aromas of pear and peach, intertwined with delicate white flowers. On the palate, it offers a medium-bodied texture balanced by bright acidity, leading to a crisp, refreshing finish. Fermented in stainless steel and aged in a combination of neutral oak and stainless steel barrels, the wine was bottled after six months to preserve its youthful energy and purity. \$32

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Little Creek Vineyard

“Go down the gravel road, cross the little bridge, and take a left up Brushy Ridge. Drive the windy road for a few miles, and once you see the trellis gate, you’re there.”



If you've never been to the West Sonoma Coast, you're not alone. There are plenty of cows, black-tailed deer, gray foxes, coyotes, bobcats, raccoons, opossums, black-tailed jackrabbits, etc... but not a lot of people. Along the coast it's rocky and wind-swept, but a few miles from the Pacific lies some of the best Pinot Noir vineyards in the world. They're unassuming and not at all pretentious, and you'd never guess the grapes that grow there make some of the most exceptional Pinots anywhere. Little Creek Vineyard is right in the heart of one of our favorite growing areas on the West Sonoma Coast (Annapolis) and, with the surrounding redwoods, moderate temperatures, and close proximity to the ocean, it's just what we want in a Pinot vineyard. It doesn't hurt that it's so darn charming (in its rustic, West Sonoma Coast kind of way). This wine is as scarce as it gets - we hope you enjoy every sip.

FUN WITH PAIRINGS BY SARAH P

“Cutting for Stone” by Abraham Vergese & the 2023 Little Creek Vineyard Pinot Noir

Being that it's our first Pinot designate since 2011, I absolutely had to find the right pairing for this wine. I felt a book was in order - so why not one from the time period during which we released our last designate wine? I read Cutting for Stone not long after its 2009 publish date, so it fit the bill. The story follows twin brothers born of a secret union between an Indian nun and a British surgeon (scandalous!). Orphaned by their mother, with a shared fascination of medicine, the twins come of age as Ethiopia hovers on the brink of revolution. My parents (a doctor and a nurse) recommended this book to me at the time, and I couldn't put it down. It's touching, raw and intense... with writing that really moved me. While emotion is at its center, it goes into great detail about medicine and the human anatomy, which adds another level of learning and thinking. Conversations about religion, spirituality, family, and medicine ensued... making it an even better reading experience. As for the pairing, Little Creek Pinot Noir is bright yet understated, overt yet subtle, with layers of complexity. A perfect pairing, metaphorically speaking, and I hope that sitting down to read a great book with this wine in your glass will bring you a many happy moments. Enjoy!

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Chris Sanchez