



2003 Russian Cuvée

Russian Cuvée commemorates the style of sparklings we made for the historic Reagan - Gorbachev summit meetings, which ended the Cold War. Although "sweeter" than the Classic vintage Brut, the higher dosage doesn't come across as sweet, but does make the wine richer. Most recently, the White House chose this cuvée for the dinner honoring the Pope in April.

Technical Data

Appellation: Green Valley of Russian River Valley

Blend: 70% Pinot Noir 30% Chardonnay

Alcohol: 13.0% v/v

Acidity: .85 g/100ml

Residual Sugar: 1.2 g/100ml

pH: 3.16

Malolactic Fermentation: None

Barrels: 15% Barrel Fermented

Harvest Dates: August 28 - September 7, 2003

Date Bottled: May 2004

Release Date: 1st disgorging, February, 2008

Total Production: 1,200 Cases

Suggested Retail Price: \$33.00

Winemaking: Hand harvested in the chilly fog of early morning, our Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes are gently pressed as whole clusters yielding base wines of great delicacy. The juice ferments slowly at 62° to 65° f retaining vibrant fruit esters. In blending this wine we chose Pinot Noir and Chardonnay lots that were a bit shy by nose but have lean and angular elements by mouth. What was once shy now exhibits wonderful complexity and creaminess that comes from four plus years of aging on the yeast. The dosage for this wine is 16 ml of Special LEX, (50% Chardonnay, 50% Pinot Noir).

Precision Winegrowing: At Iron Horse "Estate Bottled" means that the winemaking begins in the vineyard. Our location in Green Valley represents the very best soil, climate and aspects for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Our goal is to grow the best winegrapes we should be growing through what we call "precision winegrowing." All pruning, canopy management, irrigation and cover crop decisions are determined on a block-by-block (and sometimes even vine-by-vine) basis, considering both the vintage at hand and the long-term needs of the land.

For Sparkling and Still Wine, Precision Harvesting is Key: Our only rule is to make the best wines we can. We wait until harvest to decide sparkling or still, as the only difference is the brix level (or the amount of sugar in the grapes, less for sparklings, more for still). Then winemaker David Munksgard considers berry size (bigger is better for sparklings, smaller for still), the health of the canopy, clone selection, even small details such as the relative dampness of the cover crop can make a difference. If necessary, parts of the same block may be picked on different days.

Tasting Notes & Food Pairings: By nose; yeast, honey and vanilla. By mouth; rich, ripe red apple and fig with a long finish. A perfect aperitif and a great cocktail simply by adding a few pomegranate seeds to the flute. It is also pairs with foie gras, sweet and sour sauces, ginger, almonds, fresh ricotta cheese and even vine-ripened tomatoes with Hawaiian black salt.

