



2004 Chinese Cuvée

This is Iron Horse's second vintage of Chinese Cuvée. It commemorates the Year of the Snake, which begins Sunday, February 10, 2013. The first vintage, Dragon Cuvée, was served to China's then Vice President Xi Jinping at a State Department lunch hosted by Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Xi has just been named General Secretary of the Communist Party and becomes China's President next March. Snake Cuvée is great for people born in "Snake Years: 1929, 1941, 1953 (who are turning 60 next year), 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001 (too young to drink, but for the parents), and babies due in 2013.

Technical Data

Appellation: Green Valley of Russian River Valley

Blend: 50% Pinot Noir 50% Chardonnay

Alcohol: 13.5% v/v

Acidity: .85 g/100ml

Residual Sugar: 0.4 g/100ml

pH: 2.95

Malolactic Fermentation: None

Barrels: 0% Barrel Fermented

Harvest Dates: August 10 - August 24, 2004

Date Bottled: June 2005

Release Date: Current disgorging January 2013

Total Production: 500 Cases

Suggested Retail Price: \$98.00

Artisanal Winemaking: Hand harvested in the 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 eight plus years of aging on the yeast. The dosage for this wine is a mere 4 ml of Blanc de Blancs LEX, (a simple syrup made of 2 ml sugar, 2 ml Chardonnay and 2 ml of our 2009 rued Clone Chardonnay). Technically an Extra Brut.

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: "Snake" is remarkably dry, spicy, vibrant and bright. It has a luxurious mouth feel – all silk and satin. This is a beautiful wine for a celebratory toast, or to enjoy with lobster, crab or scallops.

