

2000 Palazzio Pinot Noir



To launch our first vintage of the new Millennium, this fall we proudly debut our 2000 Palazzio Pinot Noir. This wine is a truly special, handcrafted blend made from grapes grown by our world-class vineyard-partners in the cool, coastal AVAs of Monterey County. Very low yields, meticulous farming, and only the finest French oak lead to this elegant wine.

The creation of the Palazzio Pinot Noir took a significant amount of forethought and planning. Our plan is to always strive to be the top California Pinot Noir producer, and that means improving quality each and every year. We also want to grow enough to meet the expanding demand for Testarossa wines, but without sacrificing quality by growing too fast.

With the 2000 Palazzio Pinot Noir we have created a wine that is both consistent with our high-standards for taste and style, and that also satisfies our customers' request for more Pinot Noir.

Naming our new wine was a lot of fun! We went through hundreds of different names and finally chose Palazzio, which means palace in an Italian dialect. We fell in love with the name as it evokes memories of the royal feasts once served in the grand palaces of Europe. Whether out in the town, or in your own "Palazzio" we hope you will enjoy this great bottle of Pinot Noir!



California Central Coast

Since 1997 we have made a Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Pinot Noir, from grapes grown in Robert Talbott's famed estate. The vineyard lies in the Salinas Valley of Monterey County, right in the middle of the Santa Lucia Highlands appellation. The long, cool growing season, influenced by the nearby Monterey Bay, enhances this appellation's ability to produce some of the most intensely flavored Pinot fruit in California.

Gary Francioni and Gary Pisoni have known each other since they were young children, growing up together in Gonzales, California. Based on the success of their own vineyards, in 1997 they decided to go in on a joint venture and plant a new vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands. Using budwood from the Pisoni Vineyard, they planted 42 acres of Pinot Noir, and the remaining eight acres were planted to Syrah. An incredible site, a special clone of Pinot and the Garys' meticulous farming practices have made this one of the most sought after Pinot vineyards in the country.

The Francioni family is not new to growing Pinot Noir, Gary's cousin Ray planted a Pinot Noir vineyard in Monterey County in 1973. Ray's vineyard is planted with the famous Swan clone of Pinot Noir, yielding very different fruit flavors than Sleepy Hollow and Garys'. New trellising techniques and much lower yields result in intensely colored and bright berry fruit. The Pinot Noir from this vineyard is sure to gain much deserved recognition in the next few years.

The fruit from each of these vineyards was handled individually to better draw the specific flavors of each site. However, as with all of our Pinot, the grapes were immediately destemmed upon arrival at the winery and then gently transported to our custom-designed five-ton stainless steel fermenting tanks. After a four to six day cold soak, the tanks were then inoculated with Assmannshausen yeast and for the next nine to fourteen days our harvest crew punched the fermenting Pinot Noir two to three times per day. After a gentle pressing in our new Europress, the Pinot Noir was placed in up to 50% new French oak for 11 months.

During the intensive blending trials of the spring and summer 2001, our favorite Palazzio Pinot Noir ended up being a blend of specific barrels from these three vineyards. Except for our Cuvée Niçlaire Reserve, we had never blended Pinot Noir vineyards together. When blended, all these components came together beautifully, producing a Pinot that while approachable maintains the complexities of the vineyard-designated bottlings. We will still produce the vineyard designates but, starting with this release, we will also blend a Palazzio Pinot Noir in quantities that make it more readily available.

2000 PALAZZIO PINOT NOIR

VINEYARDS

Garys' Vineyard, Ray Francioni Vineyard,
Sleepy Hollow Vineyard

Appellation: Monterey

First Testarossa Vintage: 2000

HARVEST

Sugar: Garys' Vineyard, 25.6° Brix

Ray Francioni Vineyard, 25.2° Brix

Sleepy Hollow Vineyard, 25.4° Brix

Total acidity: Garys' Vineyard, 8.3 g/L

Ray Francioni Vineyard, 8.1 g/L

Sleepy Hollow Vineyard, 7.6 g/L

pH: Garys' Vineyard, 3.37

Ray Francioni Vineyard, 3.22

Sleepy Hollow Vineyard, 3.60

Date harvested: Garys' Vineyard, September 12, 2000

Ray Francioni Vineyard, September 21, 2000

Sleepy Hollow Vineyard, September 20, 2000

BOTTLE

Alcohol: 14.5%

Total acidity: 7.0 g/L

pH: 3.65

Bottling date: September 7, 2001

Time in oak: 11 months

Percent new oak: 50%

Production: 922 cases, 750 ml

100 cases, 375 ml

Suggested Retail Price: 750mL, \$ 32.00

375mL, \$ 16.00

Optimum time for consumption: 2001-2003