



OVERALL NOTE ON 2017 VINTAGE

After a string of fantastic vintages, 2017 proved to be a bit more challenging. By historical standards it was hardly a difficult year, but it was hardly a slam dunk either (of course, for some of us that are vertically challenged, a slam dunk it quite difficult). For much of the early growing season it was quite warm, and the grapes were maturing quickly and early. Then came the "Labor Day Heat Spike" where temperatures hit 110 degrees and many of the vines shut down. All that sounds bad, right? What saved the vintage was a relatively cool August with only one heat spike early in the month and then very mild temperatures followed. Much of the Pinot Noir was picked during this cooler period and that truly made a huge difference. Moreover, if you held on through the heat spike, the key was to pick as quickly after it as possible. We had a rush of grapes to the winery in the week that followed but those were still in very good shape. We learned this after the 2010 vintage where a similar thing happened to Zinfandel vines. Sometimes it pays to be old and having done this for a long time!

One other key from 2017 was being very selective in the blending process. Our 2017 single vineyard wines are generally smaller in production than previous vintages. That isn't because the yields were smaller, but rather because we were far more selective in the process of blending and only retained the best wines to blend together into the final bottlings.

Tasting Notes

2017 Sierra Mar Vineyard Pinot Noir

Santa Lucia Highlands

The Sierra Mar Vineyard sits at the Southern End of the Santa Lucia Highlands Appellation at the warmer end of the AVA. In some years that can be a challenge, but in 2017 it proved to be a blessing as some of the fruit (especially the sections running along ridges) ripened long before the heat spike. In other sections (in the valleys), we were able to water the vines extensively to survive the Labor Day heat, and then pick quickly thereafter. Our ability to do this was largely due to the fantastic farming of grape grower Gary Franscioni and his skill in getting everything picked in a very short period.

When we came to blending the Sierra Mar, we used a higher percentage of ridge fruit in the wine than in previous vintages, and this helps provide a brightness to the wine and a lift that might have been missing in previous vintages. Fruit from the valley sections were blended in to provide more dark fruit character and weight, but in moderate amounts. We then bulked off the rest of the wine. Unfortunately, that leaves us with a paltry 276 cases produced. **However, I think this wine has the potential to be one of the most enjoyable SIDURI Sierra Mar Vineyard Pinot Noirs in many years. This wine is made for drinking on the early side, so don't hesitate to pop a bottle any time.**

2017 Barbieri Vineyard Pinot Noir

Russian River Valley

The Barbieri Vineyard in the heart of the Russian River Valley, on Olivet Lane, is one of our best sites in this famed Appellation. We worked with this vineyard way back when it was planted to Zinfandel and it was an exceptional site then (even though the Zin was virused) and it is equally, if not more, spectacular now that it is planted to Pinot Noir. Interestingly enough, this is a site that somehow escaped the Labor Day heat pretty well unaffected. I am convinced that this site greatly benefitted from the first normal (above normal, actually) winter rain, and this produced a very healthy canopy and very happy vines that allowed them to go through the heat in good shape. We harvested 3 different clones from this site and, all throughout fermentation, we thought this was some of the best fruit of the vintage. When it came to blending, we were thrilled at the overall quality across all of the sections and were able to use a good amount of each lot in the final wine. **The 2017 SIDURI Barbieri Vineyard Pinot Noir shows an uncommon plushness for the vintage, with great texture and wonderful mouthfeel. This is like stereotypical Russian River Valley Pinot Noir on steroids and I love it.**

2017 Clos Pepe Vineyard Pinot Noir

Santa Rita Hills

Truly great sites shine through in producing great wine, year after year. There is perhaps no adage truer in all of winemaking than this. Clos Pepe Vineyard is a truly great site and one that Siduri has been privileged to work with since the inaugural 2000 vintage. Older vineyards such as Clos Pepe have a way of asserting their character, perhaps most especially when they are tested. The first two sections out of our 3 sections in the vineyard, were picked prior to the heat. The Hillside 115 and the Hillside Pommard both showed extraordinary character right from the get-go. What surprised us the most was how well the lower section of Clos Pepe 115 clone Pinot Noir performed after being picked post-heatwave. Now, this section of Clos Pepe, actually below Highway 246, is perhaps the coldest spot in the Sta. Rita Hills so maybe that helped mitigate the heat. Or maybe the pedigree of the vineyard just decided to shine through, but whatever the case, we used more of this lower section of the vineyard than in previous vintages. **In my opinion, 2017 SIDURI Clos Pepe is one of, if not our finest single-vineyard Pinot Noirs from this vintage. I don't know how to describe it, other than it has layers of complexity and a level of class that is unusual in any wine, and particularly unusual in 2017. This is a great wine in any vintage and will age well for some time in your cellar.**

2017 John Sebastiano Vineyard Pinot Noir

Santa Rita Hills

In the 2017 vintage, the John Sebastiano Vineyard, on the steep slopes running along the Eastern edge of the Sta. Rita Hills, benefitted from being an early ripening site. We picked all our fruit here prior to the Labor Day heat spike during the aforementioned cooler days of August. And it is a good thing that we did, as the John Sebastiano Vineyard continues to have some of the smallest berries of any of our vineyards and they likely wouldn't have survived two days at 110 degrees. By snatching this fruit off the vines early we were able to preserve not only the quality of the fruit, but also the character of the site. The resulting wine shows great red fruit character, with an earthiness in the background that comes from the steep slopes and also a bit of a tannic edge that should allow it to age well for a few years. **Ripe, rich and concentrated, don't be afraid to open it now, but serve it with some food, or hold it back for a couple of years and be extremely happy with what you have!**

2017 Perry Ranch Vineyard Pinot Noir

Russian River Valley

As a reminder, the Perry Ranch Vineyard is the property formerly known as the Keefer Ranch. It has been renamed since Marcy Keefer's sad passing, and now is expertly farmed by the Duttons. As always, we purchase 4 distinct sections and clones here – 114, 777, Pommard and Clone 23. The 114, 777, and Pommard always ripen far before the 23 and we picked them early. We got on our high horse and picked the Clone 23 right after the heat spike, but it didn't fair as well and ultimately was left out of the final blend. However, the other 3 clones performed incredibly well and the Pommard even had ripe stems, leading us to use a decent amount of whole clusters in this fermentation. This all led to a wonderfully aromatic Perry Ranch Pinot Noir, with great lift on the nose from the stems. In the mouth the wine is a bit more red-fruited than normal (no 23 led to that) but that also led to an increased vibrancy and excitement, which follows through on a fine acid driven finish. **A somewhat atypical Perry Ranch, but one that should work extraordinarily well with food.**

2017 Van Der Kamp Vineyard Pinot Noir

Sonoma Mountain

The Sonoma Mountain AVA is rarely discussed for Pinot Noir, primarily because most of the vineyards are situated on the Eastern facing edge of the mountain and thus are warmer and better suited for Bordeaux varieties. However, those vineyards facing west open directly to the Petaluma Gap and are quite cool. Like, really cool. Like far west Sonoma Coast cool. In fact, as odd as it seems, I often compare the ripening conditions at Van der Kamp to those at the Hirsch Vineyard on the far Sonoma Coast. So perhaps this explains why the Van der Kamp Vineyard performed so well during the 2017 vintage. Or perhaps it is the farming of Ulysses Van der Kamp, which has taken the quality here to greater heights than ever before. Whatever the case, there is no doubt in my mind that we are producing better Van der Kamp Pinot Noirs now than ever before (and we've been getting this fruit since 1996). **As always, the 2017 SIDURI Van der Kamp isn't our most weighty Pinot Noir, but it is amongst the most distinctive, with a forest floor and smoked meat character, along with red fruits and a slight hint of underbrush. This wine cries out for food and is truly one of the best wines of the vintage.**

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Cheers,



Adam Lee and everyone at SIDURI