

ZIATA

2016 PINOT NOIR GREEN VALLEY OF THE RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY, SONOMA

The Vineyards:

“When I began searching for fruit to launch my Russian River Pinot Noir in 2013, I had the good fortune to meet Charlie Chenoweth, one of California's renowned vinedressers. The Chenoweth family has lived and farmed in the Sebastopol area for more than a century. Chenoweth Vineyard Bootlegger's Hill, a partnership among Charlie and two other all-stars of the California wine industry—Kosta Browne, and Ted Elliot—is located in Green Valley, a sub-AVA of the Russian River Valley AVA. 30 acres planted in 2009 to 115, 667, Pommard, 23, 37, Calera and Elite clones.

Green Valley is bounded by the towns of Sebastopol, Forestville and Occidental. Tightly delineated geographically and climatically, it is the most consistent North Coast appellation in terms of soil, climate and flavor profile. Two factors in particular make it ideal for Pinot Noir. 1) The predominant soil type is Goldridge, which with its excellent drainage and low fertility, curtails the vine's vigor. This results in fewer clusters but of better quality. 2) Its elevation and cool coastal climate mean a smaller swing between day and night temperatures, and overall cooler daytime temperatures during the growing season.

So, we were excited when Charlie took us on tour of the blocks available on Chenoweth Vineyard Bootlegger's Hill, a virtual candy store of clones, rootstocks and pruning methods. When we tasted the fruit, we felt we had hit pay dirt, with its complex mix of red fruit flavors. A visit to Kosta Browne Winery to taste the previous vintage of the same clones we had selected sealed the deal: the lush flavors from the vineyard carried over easily to the finished wine.

Our first three vintages convinced us the tiny Green Valley was the place for ultra-premium Pinot Noir, so when Charlie told us in 2016 of another possible source, we jumped. Stephens Vineyard, 10 acres that feature Goldridge soil along the top of the vineyard and transition to Franciscan plate as the vineyard takes a steep 120-foot drop in elevation, and which are planted to Pommard #4 and Dijon clones 115, 777 and 667. The mix of soils, elevations and clones adds a beautiful level of complexity to wines: aromas of violets and flavors of ripe red fruit topped with notes of cinnamon and spice.

Charlie farms both sites for us and fruit from these two vineyards play well together in the cellar, resulting in a wine that's elegant, plush, and packed with a cornucopia of red fruits, with spice elements adding even more layers to this gorgeous wine.”—Karen Cakebread

The 2016 Growing Season:

The growing season came early, but progressed evenly, with sugar and phenolic development in sync. A few heat spells mid-summer pushed ripening along, which was then slowed briefly by cool, foggy weather in August. The moderate weather throughout allowed for a perfect amount of hang time for the fruit, which boosted flavors and deepened the color.

The Winemaking: Winemaker Jennifer Williams has been with Ziata since January 2015. After interning for a harvest at Araujo Estate and Spottswoode Estate, she joined Spottswoode full time and worked under the tutelage of vineyard manager David Abreu before becoming the winery's vineyard manager for two years, and then winemaker for six years, before launching her consulting business in 2011.

Fermentation: After a cold soak, the fruit underwent fermentation in stainless steel open-top tanks, with punchdowns and pumpovers. Approximately 5-10% of the wine underwent whole-cluster fermentation. Total skin contact time was 18-20 days.

Aging: 12 months in a combination of 35% new and 65% neutral French oak barrels.

Blend: 100% Pinot Noir, clones 115, 23, 37, 667 and Calera

Alcohol: 14.1%

Production: 450 cases