



## 2003 PINOT NOIR, GATEKEEPERS



Gatekeepers came about while first imagining how to best represent the Pinot Noir variety in the Santa Rita Hills appellation and at the same time capture a sense of terroir of both the appellation and a vineyard - or vineyards. After playing with the concept in 2002 it was evident that blending more than two vineyards diminished the sense of individual terroir. Conversely, we discovered that a blend of fruit from two vineyards not only provided a clear expression of each, but also an elevated complexity absent in wines made from a singular vineyard source. Additional nuances and complexity were further enhanced by combining two clones from each vineyard.

The wine reveals delicate aromas of cherries, plum, watermelon and rose petals with hints of pomegranates, sandalwood and orange rinds with a wonderful integration of oak. We like to think that this New World Pinot Noir is properly aligned while having a wonderful style of

finesse and complexity. We further believe it is important to have restraint in order to attain this variety's purist attributes.

The Rio Vista Vineyard is on the far eastern end of Santa Rita Hills, while Ashley's is the westernmost vineyard in the appellation. The differences in terroir are evident in the final blend, with Rio Vista contributing more structure and weight and Ashley's adding delicate qualities that hover around the palate. The combination of the two results in a rich texture with an up, down, outward and inward sensory experience.

With the 2003 vintage, we were able to capture a balance of acids, tannins and sugars that were aligned with ripe flavors. With the 2003 Gatekeepers, we believe that we have achieved our goal of capturing the feeling of Santa Rita Hills from the far corners of the appellation, keeping an individual sense of place for both the Rio Vista and Ashley's vineyards, enhancing complexity in the wine from three different clones, all the while creating a wine with restraint, varietal quality and finesse.

Our winemaking techniques for Gatekeepers are traditional and hands-off as much as possible. The grapes were hand harvested almost a month apart, with the different clones processed separately. Upon arrival at the winery in the early hours of the morning, the clusters are gently de-stemmed and then placed in small bins, where the whole berries cold soaked for a few days before the indigenous yeasts caused fermentation to begin. We then inoculated with a cultured yeast and closely monitored the temperature to maintain a cool, slow fermentation. The cap was gently pushed back into the fermenting juice whenever the temperature started to rise – usually once or twice a day. We believe this gentle handling preserves the delicate nuances of Pinot Noir. Once the wine completed fermentation, the “must” was pressed in our basket press and the new wine was gravity racked into French oak barrels. The different components of Gatekeepers were barreled separately, and were racked twice during the year. The final blend is comprised of 40% Rio Vista fruit and 60% from Ashley's Vineyard. We harvested Dijon Clone 115 from both vineyards, so the final blend consists of 51% clone 115, 27% Dijon clone 777 and 22% Dijon clone 113.

### Technical Specifications

Barrel Mix:	100% French Oak, 40% new	Bottled:	August, 2004
Alcohol:	13.7% by volume	Released:	November 2004
TA:	6.8 grams/liter	Production:	420 cases (750ml x 12)
pH:	3.65	Price:	\$27.50/bottle