



2020 Caracol Pinot Noir

Production Insights

Who We Are

Alma Rosa is deeply rooted in the winemaking history of the Santa Rosa Hills in the southern sector of the Sta. Rita Hills AVA. Here, growing conditions combine sunshine with the powerful cooling influence of onshore winds and fog from the Pacific Ocean. The unique geography, chilly climate, and clay-loam soils attracted Richard Sanford to this area in the early 70s where he pioneered Pinot Noir in Santa Barbara County. Growing consistently balanced wines through sustainable farming is part of the enduring legacy of our founder Richard Sanford.

Vineyard

- 100% El Jabali Vineyard — Block 9 (Caracol Planting), Sta. Rita Hills

Vintage Notes

The 2020 vintage began with much-needed rain in March and April, which resulted in delayed bud break. An ideal early growing season with classic Sta. Rita Hills conditions, including daily wind and fog from the Pacific Ocean, the 2020 vintage differentiated itself from recent vintages due to significant heat throughout mid-August and September. The resulting crop yielded fruit with ideal ripeness and character. Santa Barbara County remained one of the only wine regions on the West Coast unaffected by fires.

Winemaking

- Wine was fermented 10% whole cluster in small 1-ton bins using selected yeasts after a 5-day cold soak
- Juice was pressed free run directly into 40% new French oak barrels, and allowed to go through natural malolactic fermentation
- Wine sat on gross lees till mid-December when it was racked off lees via bulldog and allowed to settle naturally, aged for 12 months total in 40% new French oak
- Bottled unfiltered and unfined in January 2021

Tasting Notes

The 2020 Alma Rosa Caracol Pinot Noir is the first standalone wine to come from Block 9, a spiral-shaped hilltop block on our estate vineyard, El Jabali. Originally planted in 2013 by founder Richard Sanford, Block 9 is unique in that a variety of rootstocks and clones were used within this single block as a means of blending in the vineyard instead of the cellar. The Caracol was planted in a radiating pattern that appears like a snail's shell from above and provides each row with a different orientation to the sun. Seven years later, this experiment proved to be a success as the block produced exceptional and distinctive fruit worthy of a single block bottling. Elegant yet powerful, the alluringly dark red 2020 Caracol Pinot Noir showcases notes of lilac, lavender, sage, pomegranate, black currants and a hint of menthol on the nose. On the palate, additional hints of both red and dark fruit are complemented by refreshing acidity and pronounced chalky tannins that lead to a seamless, long finish. Winemaker Samra Morris is thrilled with the debut release of the Caracol bottling, noting "this wine is perfect, ready to sip now or be enjoyed for years to come."

