

2008 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

67% Horse Ridge Vineyard, 33% Keefer Ranch

Clones: 115, 23

Alcohol: 14.5%

pH: 3.60

TA: 6.1 g/L

Barrel aging: 15 months in 20% new and 80% 1 year old French oak

Cases produced: 144

After taking a year off in 2007 with this appellation blend, I'm happy to bring it back with a 2008 release. This year's cuvée comes from the Horse Ridge Vineyard and from the very famous Keefer Ranch. For my first year working with Keefer fruit for Sandler, I received just short of one ton in '08. It would have been too small an amount to bottle as a single vineyard, so I'll wait until the '09 Keefer for the first vineyard designation. In the meantime, the Keefer Pinot adds acidity, sophistication and subtlety to the very outgoing and larger-framed Horse Ridge fruit in this '08 Sonoma Coast blend.

A good way to describe this wine is that it comes from both ends of the 2008 harvest. The Horse Ridge fruit came in at the tail end of the extreme heat wave which endured the last week of August. The grapes were super ripe, but miraculously not raisined. After the weather cooled sufficiently, the Keefer Ranch fruit hung for another two weeks and it was harvested in perfect condition. So you'll find both very ripe, fruity notes to the nose along with the beautiful, flowery perfume that only Pinot can produce. The palate is on the larger size, since two thirds of the wine comes from Horse Ridge. And then Keefer takes over again on the finish with its great acidity and soft fruit. This wine is already drinking very well, and should continue for several years.

