

## 2009 Clos Pepe Vineyard Pinot Noir

100% Clos Pepe Vineyard

Appellation: Santa Rita Hills

Clone: Pommard

Alcohol: 14.4%

pH: 3.51

TA: 6.6 g/L

Barrel aging: 10 months in 33% new and 67% 2 year old French oak

Cases produced: 71

My history with Clos Pepe dates back to my first vintage as the winemaker at Testarossa, 1999. Back then, we were sourcing only Chardonnay from Wes Hagen, the outstanding vineyard manager of Clos Pepe. It was some of the most incredible Chardonnay I had ever worked with. However, their Pinot Noir was sold out, they had none to sell us. I did get to make some Clos Pepe Pinot in the 2002 vintage at Testarossa, but wouldn't see it again until this 2009 for Sandler. I was elated when owner Steve Pepe and Wes agreed to sell me one ton of their Pommard clone last year.

The 2009 Sandler Clos Pepe is a very complex wine. It's definitely lighter in body than most Clos Pepe Pinots you'll come across, but at the same time it has a deep, intriguing nose of subtle fruits and spices. There's a lot going on in this wine, and it seems to change each time you pick up the glass. I would predict this wine needs at least a year in the bottle to evolve, maybe longer. My best guess is that the '09 Clos Pepe Pinot will be at its best from 2013 to 2017. Time will tell.

