



PINOT GRIGIO SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, 2004

The Pinot Grigio grape, a pink-skinned derivation of Pinot Noir, is also a cousin of Chardonnay. In northern Italy it produces characterful dry white wines; in France's Alsace region it is known as Pinot Gris or Tokay d'Alsace and produces rich, fat, honeyed wines.

Our 2004 Pinot Grigio is a blend of wines from two Santa Barbara County vineyards - Ashley's Vineyard and Thompson Vineyard. Ashley's Vineyard is in the western end of Santa Rita Hills. The daily morning fog and the afternoon breezes keep the temperatures low, allowing the fruit to develop complexity and a lively acidity. Thompson Vineyard is further north and east, near Los Alamos, where warmer temperatures produce fruitier characteristics and an interesting texture.

The two vineyards were picked within a week of each other. The grapes were pressed and then cold settled for a week before being brought up to cellar temperature and inoculated with yeast. As with all of our white wines, the Pinot Grigio was cold-fermented in 100% stainless steel to preserve the natural floral and fruit aromas and flavors. The 2004 Pinot Grigio was completely aged in stainless steel, and bottled in February 2005 as our first wine with a screw-top finish.

The first impression of the wine is of heady aromatics that are floral, with distinct notes of white flower, apricot blossoms and lilies, with hints of fresh bread and lycee. A first taste wakes up the palate with other exotic flavors of asian pear and kumquats. The wine has a bracing and lively fruit-acid balance, with nuances of minerality, a subtle reminder of fruit-pie meringue and a long, lingering and pleasant lemon-lime finish. Weightier than most Pinot Grigio wines, this is more than just something to drink until the red is open.

The dry acidity of this wine means that it should be enjoyed while still young. Because it is a wine that is best consumed in its youth, we've released this refreshing wine with a screw-top finish. Not only does this minimize bottle shock and allow you to drink it right away, but also makes it extremely easy to re-seal!

Although the 2004 Pinot Grigio is definitely not a lightweight, it makes a great aperitif or an accompaniment to appetizers and light dining. One of our favorites is stuffed rice balls - a classic Italian snack.