

PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

*"If You Drink
No Noir
You Pinot Noir!"*

August 16, 2016

On the Pinot Trail: Wayfarer

I visited Wayfarer Vineyard for the second time with winemaker Bibiana Gonzelz Rave in May 2016. We left Sebastopol and drove the winding roads for 45 minutes through the tall coastal redwoods out to the remote Fort Ross Seaview AVA located in the far west Sonoma Coast. You cannot really appreciate the challenges of farming wine grapes in this rugged landscape far removed from the comforts of the Russian River Valley until you make the drive.

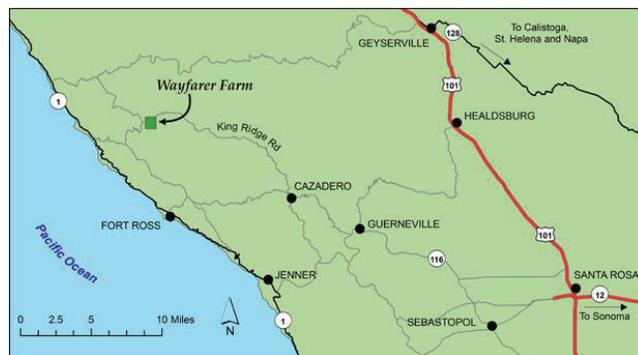
Bibiana is now also the winemaker for Pahlmeyer wines so she must travel to both Wayfarer and the Napa Valley from Santa Rosa where the Wayfarer wines are crafted on a regular basis. She not only makes the wines for both labels, but also directs the winegrowing. She also has her own label, Cattleya Wines. Born in Colombia and trained in France, she is one of California's most recognized winemakers and a member of the extended Pisoni family (her husband is Pisoni winemaker Jeff Pisoni).

Bibiana and I were met at Wayfarer by Cleo Pahlmeyer who directs the Wayfarer project. Extensive coverage of Wayfarer was published previously in the PinotFile (www.princeofpinot.com/article/1583/).

The 2014 vintage Wayfarer wines reviewed here have not been released and the release dates will be determined solely by the winemaker. The 2014 Wayfarer Vineyard Chardonnay and Wayfarer Vineyard Pinot Noir will tentatively be released in the fall and the other wines will follow in 2017. The wines are crafted in such a fashion to require additional bottle aging before release. They unfold slowly in the glass, finding more traction, integration and nuance over time, improving when tasted from opened bottles one or more days later. The reductive winemaking, the oak interplay and tannic backbone dictate that these wines become cellar candidates.

The reviews here are brief snippets and I will give thorough reviews of all the wines in the fall. That said, these wines will be highly rated and should be in every serious pinotophile's cellar. The Wayfarer wines are allocated and sold through a mailing list at www.wayfarervineyard.com.

The wines, the third vintage for the Wayfarer label, were bottled in December 2015 after spending 13 months in barrel. The wines tasted were opened about 6 hours before and the cork replaced. Several were decanted during the tasting.



- Rusty Gaffney

2014 Wayfarer Wayfarer Vineyard Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir

14.5% alc., 1,020 cases. Free run juice only. A quality barrel selection. · The nose releases its charms slowly in the glass, evolving into a very engaging mix of cherry and spice aromas. The silky mouthfeel is immediately satisfying in this mid weight plus wine offering intense flavors of blackberry and cassis. Juicy acidity lends vibrancy and tempered tannins make for more approachability. The most open and giving of the wines tasted on this date in May 2016.

Score: 91-93

2014 Wayfarer Paige's Ridge Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir

14.8% alc., 43 cases. Dijon clone 667. Fermented in a wood tank and aged in two new barrels. · The nose opens slowly in the glass to reveal enticing aromas of black cherry, boysenberry, woodlands and spice. A gorgeous mid weight plus core of dark fruit greets the palate. A bit rustic and earthy, with a hint of thiols and firmly defined tannins. After the wine was decanted and retasted, more fruit expression was evident.

Score: 90-92

2014 Wayfarer Mother Rock Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir

14.3% alc., 335 cases. Clones are Mt Eden and Dijon 777. · Very sexy perfume of dark red berries and cherries with a lovely spice and floral accent. The deep red fruits really demand attention in this well structured mid weight plus styled wine that offers considerable textural interest. Balance is spot on, the finish is noticeably generous, and the wine has a very streamlined demeanor.

Score: 92-94

2014 Wayfarer Golden Mean Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir

14.5% alc., 515 cases. Pommard and Swan clones. · The nose is currently more oak infused with aromas of spice and vanillin. More fruity on the palate with muscular tannins, and sweet oak dancing in the background. A very sappy, dark fruited mid palate carries over on the intense finish.

Score: 91-93

2014 Wayfarer The Traveler Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 195 cases. A suitcase selection. 0% whole cluster. · The most closed wine. Much more expressive after the wine was decanted. The nose is rather primary, offering scents of rose petal, spice, woodland path and oak dust. A charge of glorious blackberry, blueberry and pomegranate flavors are framed by mature tannins. Very sleek and soft in the mouth, with good natural acidity and a very lengthy finish.

Score: 92-94

2014 Wayfarer Wayfarer Vineyard Fort Ross-Seaview Chardonnay

14.5% alc., 815 cases. 6 blocks planted on 6 acres to 4 clones. Barrel fermented and aged in 65% new French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. · Light golden yellow color in the glass. Slight reduction flinty note that is appealing. Engaging aromas of lemon oil, baked apple, honey, lees and subtle butter note. Very slightly creamy on the palate with delicious flavors of lemon, pear and white peach, accented with a fleurdeselinfused acidity.

Score: 93-95

