

Porter Creek, Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Estate

- Estate bottled Pinot Noir from one of Russian River's pioneering Pinot producers
 - Balanced and elegant in Alex Davis's signature style
 - Biodynamically farmed; very small production

The Producer

With a focus on organic, hillside-grown, vineyard-designated wines primarily from its Russian River estate, Porter Creek produces some of the most balanced, elegant, and refined wines in America. Since the first vintage in 1982, the small family-owned winery has gone beyond its flagship Pinot Noir to produce Chardonnay, Zinfandel, Carignane, Syrah and other varieties that have attracted cult-like followings among experts and consumers alike. Porter Creek's small production and consistent high quality keep the wines high in demand, and many sell out just months after release.

Located in the most prestigious part of the Russian River appellation, Porter Creek was established by George Davis in 1979—before Russian River Valley was an appellation. The estate features 20 acres planted—all hillside vineyards (averaging 20 degree grade), reminiscent of grand cru vineyards in the Côte d'Or, Burgundy.

Following the European vigneron model, George Davis groomed his eldest son, Alex, to become proprietor and winemaker. Before taking the helm in 1997, Alex learned how to operate every aspect of the winery—from welding tractors, to running the books; he also studied enology and viticulture at Fresno State and Dijon, and trained in Dijon (with Christophe Roumier and Bernard Michelot), and in the Rhône Valley (Marcel Guigal).

With his years of apprenticeship, Alex developed a strong vision for balanced, vineyard-driven wines—a vision that he has successfully realized vintage after vintage, through rare dedication, passion and attention to detail. While trends favored riper, more fruit-driven wine, Alex stayed true to his vision, even converting the estate to organic and then biodynamic farming at considerable expense, to coax the best from the soils.

During harvest, sorting is done in the vineyard to minimize handling. While common in Burgundy but less so in California, Alex uses whole cluster press on whites and about 1/3 on Pinot Noirs, rendering more flavor in wine.

Fermentation is natural: native yeasts are rarely supplemented; ideal temperatures are attained through harvesting at night when grapes are cold and warming tanks with blankets.

Winemaking is gravitationally oriented. Alex achieves a fine tannin structure through extended aging in limited use of new oak. Wines age in bottle for 3-6 months prior to release.

The Wine

As with every wine Porter Creek makes, the Estate Pinot Noir reflects its amazing hillside vineyards, pristine farming and classic winemaking approach. The wine comes from selections of the Fiona Hill vineyard, and is crafted to be more approachable in its youth than the longer-aged Fiona Hill Pinot Noir. Soft tannins and brooding dark fruit make it restaurant friendly upon release. Only 150 cases produced.



Region: Russian River Valley

Appellation: Russian River Valley

Vineyards: Fiona Hill

Altitude: 100-300 feet

Soil: Clay and Bedrock (reminiscent of schist, shale, granite)

Varietal Blend: 100% Pinot Noir

Vine age: 16 years old

Planting system: Double arc cane pruned

Vine density: 8'x5'

Farming: Biodynamic

Yield: 2 tons/acre

Harvest: Late September

Vinification: 3-4 day cold soak in naturally temperature controlled tanks. Open top bin fermentation with native yeasts.

Aging: 16 months aging in 228 liter French oak (25% new)

Production: 150 cases

Tasting Notes: Bright red fruits on the nose, a rich pallet and nice mineral notes on the finish.