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2004 LA BAUGE AU DESSUS PINOT NOIR

DESCRIPTION

The "world o' wine" just keeps getting weirder. People plant vineyards in hot environments, with short growing seasons, and then preach about long hangtime. Let your grapes fall apart, sugar rising out of balance, acid gone, Ph through the roof, and then exclaim that the flavor is finally "there." And all of this in a misguided effort to gain critical approval instead of to successfully farm a vineyard site. Here at ABC, we see things a bit differently. We have long hangtime. A long cool, foggy season with limited luminosity is our ace in the hole. We need to work only to achieve balance in our grapes. It is a complex, difficult, and singular task (some days Jim Clendenen thinks that he is the only American winemaker who is concerned about balanced grapes coming from the vineyard). In cool climates, you wait for the acidity to come down as the sugar rises. In hot climates, you slow ripeness to allow sufficient sugar before the acidity is gone. The goal is quite simple, but hard to achieve. 2001 was a breakthrough year for us. Our own plantings, with higher density and low vigor rootstock, began to produce, and we grew an entire vintage of Pinot that we could vinify, in balance, with no addition of acid, sugar, water, or yeast to any cuvee.

True cutting-edge wines, true natural winemaking. Word. Oddly enough, ABC took in upon itself, with no external critical motivation, to improve its viticultural craft. The results in '02 were even better in our estate vineyards. We ripened our fruit better, from a phenolic softness and balanced acidity perspective. The result is more flavor, better color, richness, and softness, and even lower alcohol in our '02 La Bauge than '01 or '00. Imagine that, more "ripe" characteristics, but at lower sugar levels. Now that is good farming. Our '02 Bauge, entirely from a block planted by Jim Clendenen in 1994, is a departure from previous "Bauges." The aromas contain cherry, berry notes with earth, spice, tea, smoke, and baked cheese Danish scents. It is complex and complete. The mouth is intense with red currant, sandalwood, tangerine rind, and lovely acidity. Jim thinks that this style of Pinot, though less complex and perfectly balanced than the '01 Bauge, represents the future of his vineyards. Our direction is toward more exacting farming, yield control, meticulous canopy management, and no must adulteration after harvest. More flavor, less alcohol. Rather be wimpy than pruny. Heavy ain't better – sweeter ain't better. Black fruits aren't in the Pinot family, nor is black color. Resist machines in winemaking, resent cellar manipulation, respect nature's order. Peace, out.

FACTS

name:	2004 La Bauge au Dessus Estate Pinot Noir
item number:	WPLB04Y
composition:	100 % pinot Noir
alcohol:	13.5 % by volume
price:	See pricelist

