

# Davis Family Vineyards

## 2006 Pinot Noir Russian River Valley

Does vintage matter? It's a question I get asked often – the short answer is yes and the long answer follows over the rest of this page.

The notion of a good, better or bad vintage stems from days in Europe when weather would destroy a summers work with early down pours and either dilute the flavors of that year's crop, or Mother Nature may just not provide enough warmth to achieve the rich, ripe flavors or soften the green and tannic notes. When they would get the heat and length of season to reach maturity it was deemed a good vintage. Over time, grapes were often moved to warmer sights, or new methods of farming were adopted, like thinning the crop load to hasten flavor development and add to concentration, depending on the specific vineyard. This type of evolution helped to reduce vintage variation, making for a little more consistency. But remember, wine is an expression of a specific grape, from a certain place in a **particular year**. It should always reflect all three! This 2006 Pinot Noir does just that. Pinot Noir should be a sensual, alluring, somewhat mysterious grape...as the meal progresses the wine should be taking you on a journey – different flavors should continue to unfold – it should have a pretty, elegant side, but still give forth a richness that stands up to any dish – and this one is all that. Our vineyard is on a southeast hillside that takes in the soft morning sun but dodges the direct harsh afternoon sun – this exposure reflects itself by leaving bright acidity and a more elegant perfume in the wine every vintage. The soils are full of volcanic ash and the minerality on the palate – the flavors of earth and stone, are also present every vintage. The third part of this trinity – the vintage, is the changing variable; because as the soil and the grape never change, the weather is never exactly the same.

The difference however is not as I started this discussion, being a good or bad vintage though -- we are lucky here in California to enjoy abundant sunshine – so vintage difference can be good year after year but still be different to reflect the details of the growing season. We prepare for the worst from Mother Nature, then hope for the best, and in the end react to make the most of what she gives us. In the winter of 2006 it rained...and rained...and rained –floods everywhere – if you think back you saw it on your evening news over the New Year's Holiday – "someone build an arc" type rains! Now, all this rain came long after the 2005 Harvest – and way too early to change the flavor of the 2006 grapes that would not show up until 3 or 4 months later...or was it? Not in our case – what happened in our Estate vineyards is that those rains continued well into the Spring, and as the vines woke up from their long winter nap, it appeared to me they may have enough moisture left in the volcanic ash and clay and sandstone that makes up our soil; and that those vines had stored enough water that I decided, with a cautious eye, to try to avoid irrigating the entire season – and I was able to do just that –Dry farming those vines. I think you can taste the difference too – a noticeable concentration of flavors, the vines had all they needed but struggled near the season's end. Not enough to be in harms way, but enough to deliver a mouthful of magic. We always strive to keep our water on the low side but can rarely hold off for an entire year! 2006 was a year that started soggy, dark and gloomy, but soon shifted to a chance to make a *silky Pinot from a sow's ear*.

### Davis Family Vineyards

52 Front Street, Healdsburg CA 95448

**Phone:** 707-569-0171 **Fax:** 707-569-0181 **Toll Free** 1-866-338-9463

©Davis Family Vineyards