

2005 pinot gris ■ paragon vineyard ■ edna valley

TASTING NOTES

VARIETAL BACKGROUND

Originating in Burgundy, Pinot Gris is one of the best known mutations of Pinot Noir. It was first grown amongst the Pinot Noir vines and harvested as a field blend. This “white” varietal added a touch of softness and acidity to round out the tannins of the red Pinot Noir. Sometime during the middle ages, Pinot Gris was brought from Burgundy to Hungary, then back to France, but to the Alsace region rather than Burgundy. During its travels, it was given the Hungarian name of Tokay. In 1980, the European Economic Community mandated that it be called by its correct name, bringing the true varietal back to the forefront.

No matter where it’s grown, Pinot Gris berries are colored anywhere from grayish-blue to brownish-pink. And as though it remembers its roots, Pinot Gris leaves are identical to Pinot Noir. Well-loved in Alsace, its depth and richness make it reminiscent of a complex white Burgundy, where it has become a sanctioned blender under the name of Pinot Beurot.

Currently, improved clonal selection seems to be invigorating enthusiasm in New Zealand, but in California, impact of Pinot Gris is limited thus far. Rather than following the lead of larger producers who are growing and harvesting grapes from the Central Valley and calling the finished wine Pinot Grigio, tangent chooses to stick to the drier Alsatian style. This wine is meant for the table, to be enjoyed at mealtime.

TANGENT PINOT GRIS

A block of newer plantings in the Paragon Vineyard of the Edna Valley on the Central Coast of California is the sole source of fruit for the tangent Pinot Gris. Benefiting from the cool influence of the Pacific only four miles to the west, this vineyard is afforded one of the longest growing seasons in the state. Soils here are a mixture of volcanic, clay loam and rocky marine sediment, offering few nutrients. The temperate climate brings extended hang time, and the soils cause the vines to stress and strain as they grow. These two factors ultimately culminate in fully ripe, concentrated fruit that bursts with flavor.

As tangent aims to produce vibrant wines of good acid structure to be naturally enjoyed with a wide range of foods, this wine was made without any oak influence, nor did any portion of it go through malo-lactic fermentation. An evocative aperitif on its own, tangent Pinot Gris also pairs well with most foods, shellfish and some hard cheeses in particular.

TASTING NOTES FROM WINEMAKER CHRISTIAN ROGUENANT

“This wine shows vibrant minerality and traditional hints of a pine-resin character. Tropical and stone fruits jump from the glass, but are well balanced by a bit of lemon and a nice acid backbone. My aim here was to keep to the pure, dry Alsatian style. It pairs nicely with many foods, especially fried calamari and classic risotto.”



WINE STATISTICS

Vineyard	Paragon Vineyard Edna Valley, California, USA
Clones	152 and 146
Rootstocks	5C, 1103, 44 - 53, Freedom
Tons per acre	3.5
Harvest date	August 27, 2005
Average Brix at harvest	23.5 degrees
Yeast	M2
Fermentation	In stainless steel at 55 degrees
Barrel contact	Zero
% ML	Zero
Alcohol	13.5%
Acid @ bottling	7.0 g/l
pH @ bottling	3.38
RS @ bottling	None
Bottling date	March 26, 2006
Closure	Screwcap
Cases made	3,500
Suggested Retail	\$17.00