FOUNDERS RESERVE PINOT NOIR
VINTAGE 2015 • RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY • ESTATE BOTTLED

OBSERVATIONS ON A NEW VINTAGE
The 2015 growing season was again incredibly dry and a continuation of the California drought for a record fourth year. Using deficit irrigation concepts and careful soil and plant moisture data, we came through the season without water shortages.

The spring and summer brought classic California weather without any extremes and we paced about two weeks earlier than our average during the growing season. Early fruit started arriving from our Vine Hill Ranch just as the fog and cool conditions returned to the area resulting in a rather lengthy three-week pick. The last of the harvested fruit finally arrived at the winery on September 24th. The delay in ripening allowed for additional hang time on the vine and the fruit to develop beautiful flavors with bright, natural acidity.

OUR VINE HILL VINEYARD
In the heart of Russian River Valley lies our Vine Hill Vineyard, which consistently provides the basis of fruit for our Founders Reserve Pinot Noir. This particular vintage was selected from a very small section within block BB which lies at the very top of the Estate. Vine Hill Vineyard, with its more than 400-ft. elevation changes, allows each ridge, slope and valley in the vineyard to contribute unique characteristics to the grapes. Combined with a variety of soils and clones, high-density spacing and rootstocks that limit excessive vine growth, the vineyards provide a beautiful variety of elegant and balanced fruit.

ON THE WINE
At Sonoma-Cutrer, we value quality above all and handle our fruit with the utmost care. Grapes are picked by hand, early each morning, into small bins and hand-sorted before a gentle destemming. Grapes then go through a four-day cold soak and an eight-to-twelve-day fermentation with the wine being punched down by hand in small, open-top fermenters. When fermentation is complete, the wine is carefully pressed using a basket press and gravity racked into barrels. For this vintage, the wine matured in barrel for sixteen months before the final blend was assembled and prepared for bottling on November 30th, 2016.

Instantly, one notices the beautifully intense, deep, garnet hue of the wine. This profoundly complex vintage yet again showcases the quality of fruit we receive from our Vine Hill Vineyard. On the nose, earthy accents and fragrant tobacco contrast the enticing aromas of blackberries, black cherry and dark chocolate. This full-bodied and richly textured wine is powerful yet approachable with flavors on the palate of allspice and bramble fruit, which you can taste throughout the lengthy finish of the wine. The intense flavors make this the perfect Pinot Noir for Cabernet drinkers!

Like all of our Founders Reserve Pinot Noirs, this vintage is crafted for longevity. Cellaring for another 2-4 years will allow the wine to continue to build complexity while softening the tannins.

Alcohol: 14.1% • TA: 5.89 gms/L • pH: 3.6 l RS: 32 gms/L (dry) • 100% Pinot Noir • 100% Malolactic • 100% Tank Fermentation
Oak aged for 16 months — 33% new, 33% 1yr, 33% 2yr old oak
Vineyard: 100% Vine Hill, block BB