



## 2006 PINOT NOIR “Rita’s Earth Cuvée” Sta. Rita Hills

### Winemaker’s Notes:

For the last half dozen years or so, our basic Pinot Noir carried a Tri-Counties Cuvée moniker. Those wines were nice, containing Pinot fruit from at least three different California counties. Beginning with this 2006 vintage, our basic Pinot becomes the soul mate to our basic Rita’s Earth Chardonnay. For those of you not yet in the know, *Rita’s Earth* is our nick name for our appellation, the Sta. Rita Hills.

What happened to the Tri-Counties concept? A little movie called *Sideways*.

After that, there was no such thing as good, inexpensive Pinot Noir grapes from places like Monterey County. So, for the next few years anyway, I think it is going to be a good time to hunker down and figure out how to make a better mouse trap (translation: how to keep our basic Pinot Noir around \$20 a bottle retail) using grapes grown close to home.

Fortunately, a couple of years ago we were able to pick up a nice 15 acres of Sta. Rita Pinot from right down the road, from “The Yard” vineyard that we now farm and lease. Also, the Pinot that we have been planting over the last few years is coming into maturity. We planted it not so much as a response to *Sideways*, but in response to the simple fact that we are in the heart of the Sta. Rita Hills, and that, movie or no-movie, the stuff was going in.

So here it is, our first all locally grown Pinot with a (circa) \$20 price tag. It’s a lighter, easy to drink version of some of the trophy Pinots we have made from places like Ocean’s Ghost and Mt. Carmel. While it’s lighter, it still has plenty of that earthy Sta. Rita Hills character; the kind of character that has inspired many growers over the last few years in the Sta. Rita Hills to plant more grapes.

### Technical Notes:

#### VINEYARDS IN THE BLEND:

86% Pinot Noir, Babcock Estate - Sta. Rita Hills

10% Pinot Noir, Scheid Vineyard – Monterey County

4% Syrah – Estelle Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley

#### FINISHED WINE:

Residual Sugar: Dry    Titratable Acidity: 6.5 g/L    PH:3.69    Alcohol:13.5%

ELEVAGE: 10 months with 20% New French Oak

BOTTLING DATE: August 14, 2007

RELEASE DATE: September 1, 2007

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 4,136 cases - 12/750 ml