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Climate

The climate of the 2011 was rather unusual: after a July with sunny, but not particularly warm, days and with nighttime temperatures below 64° Fahrenheit (18° centigrade), a wave of torrid weather - with daytime temperatures as high as 105° Fahrenheit (40° centigrade) and little nighttime coolness - then arrived. Fortunately, an excellent canopy of leaves and reasonable supply of ground water, along with a careful selection of the grapes, prevented problems of raisining from arising. Continuing high temperatures made timely picking a necessity, and the harvest began in early September. The 2011 vintage, despite these climatic conditions, nonetheless gave rich grapes and fragrant and elegant wines which, above all, showed ripe tannins and the promise of excellent longevity.

Vinification

The grapes were picked from vineyards situated at 1325 feet (400 meters) above sea level on the Castello della Sala estate, a property near the city of Orvieto in Umbria. After destemming and a partial pressing, the grapes went into stainless steel tanks where they fermented ten days; during this period, maximum attention was given to the extraction of color and tannins. The must fermented at a temperature of 79° Fahrenheit (26° centigrade) and finished in French (Allier, Tronçais) oak barrels, where it also completed its malolactic fermentation. Aging lasted eight months and the wine was then bottled. A nine month period of bottle aging in the Castello della Sala cellars preceded commercial release.

Historical Data

The ten acres (four hectares) of Pinot Noir grapes at the Castello della Sala estate are situated at an altitude of over 1300 feet (400 meters) above sea level on calcareous soils rich in marine fossils which alternate with strata of sedimentary sands from the Pliocene epoch. The wine was first produced in 1990. Castello della Sala is a fortress erected in the 14th century located approximately ten miles (18 kilometers) from the city of Orvieto and was acquired by the Antinori family in 1940.



Tasting Notes

A brilliant garnet red in color and endowed with spicy notes and delicate aromas of violets and blueberries, this Pinot Noir is tasty and supple in its tannins and promises to evolve very well indeed in bottle.