



IDLEWILD *Wines*

2015 Nebbiolo, Fox Hill Vineyard

Vineyard

Fox Hill Vineyard is without a doubt one of the most unique vineyards in Northern California. One of its true beauties is that it has remained relatively unknown. Located southeast of Ukiah on Mendocino's Talmage Bench, the soils are well drained with high concentrations of gravel and sandstone, and the farming is as old fashioned and straight forward as it gets. What makes this site so unique though is the fact that Lowell Stone decided to follow his passion, to buck every market trend, and to simply plant what he was interested in planting. Many trips to Italy turned to inspiration and the wild spectrum of varieties began to take root. The cooler tree sheltered and northwest facing blocks that I source from are appropriately planted with varietals that originate in Italy's Piemonte. Nebbiolo is said to be one of the most difficult varietals to grow outside of its original home, but the balance, grace, and power shown on the soils of Fox Hill Vineyard point to a new future.

Vintage

In 2015, the early season and long-term effects of the drought began to feel like a broken record. The cycle was on repeat for four years, each one worse than before. But, as with all of the other years in this pattern, the oddly cool Summer months seemed to moderate the effects of the unseasonably warm Winter and Spring. In the end, harvest began early and furiously fast. While staying aware of the fast onset of ripening, it became apparent that the season was going to condense and be 'all at once'. After the first nine days of harvest, I had brought in 75% of the season's fruit. Mother nature always has a way of keeping us on our toes. As with the prior three years though, proper harvesting decisions still yielded great acidity and structure to back up the density of fruit being yielded by the early year.

Winemaking

I always look towards traditional methods from Piemonte. In most cases, the important part is simply being open to the fact that the timing and details will just be different than if in Piemonte because, well, I am in Northern California. The Nebbiolo very much comes from this place of balancing tradition reimagined in new soil. Half of the fruit was destemmed, half was left whole cluster and crushed by foot. The wine was fermented natively and then topped and sealed up for an extended maceration of nearly ninety total days on skins (and stems for half). This is old fashioned, but it yielded amazing depth and spectrum in a decidedly ethereal feeling wine. Two years in neutral puncheon and one in bottle finished its aging before release.

Wine

The nose is a study in contrasts: roses, orange peel, mint, and cherry are balanced by rust, tar, earth, and sandalwood like spice. The mouthfeel is light and delicate and then gently rolls into a very firm and long structure. While a joy to drink now, this wine has many years in its future.

164 cases produced.