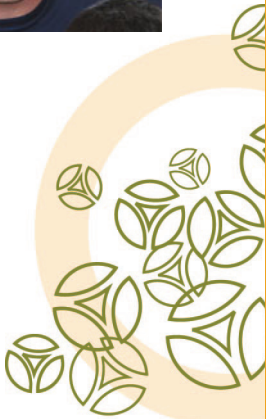


CALIFORNIA MENDOCINO

ELKE VINEYARDS ANDERSON VALLEY



triage wines

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OVERVIEW | The Elke family believes it has the “best of two worlds,” - they grow Pinot Noir grapes in the cool, picturesque Anderson Valley, and they make wine in Napa Valley in their winery adjacent to their vineyard. The bulk of their fruit is sold to premium California wineries, including some major sparkling wine producers. In the mid-90s, the Elkes started to bottle small quantities of their own wine. The flagship wine, the Blue Diamond Donnelly Creek, is made by winemaker Tom Farella, whose passion for Pinot Noir is revealed in old-world winemaking practices that produce an elegant wine characterized by ripe fruit, a spicy backbone, and velvety texture which will continue to develop with bottle aging. Mary Elke, along with her son, Matt, now makes two additional wines, a pinot noir and a chardonnay, under the “Mary Elke” label.

VINEYARD AREA: 98 acres

ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 1800 cases

TOP SITES: Donnelly Creek

SOIL TYPES: loam, cobbled stones, iron

GRAPE VARIETIES: pinot noir, chardonnay

VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES | While they practice organic farming as much as possible, they describe their vineyard practices more accurately as “sustainable,” allowing them to use very limited chemical inputs to the vineyard and do canopy management practices that help to reduce spray applications. According to Mary Elke, weed control is the single most difficult thing to manage organically, and being in a cooler, wetter region mildew can be a big problem. The Pinot Noir yields vary from 3.5 to 4.5 tons/per acre depending upon seasonal weather factors primarily. Mary believes the site, soil, rootstock and weather conditions are more determinative than an algorithm for tons per acre.

Elke vineyard is located at the confluence of Donnelly and Anderson Creeks, feeding into the Navarro River which runs through the Anderson Valley to the Pacific Ocean. The vineyard site is on a bench leading away from the creek and rises to a second “bench,” which is terraced and planted with Pommard 5 and Dijon 113 clones. The soils on the first bench are rather deep loam, well drained with large cobbled stones throughout. The second bench is a redder soil, likely more iron and other minerals and has a perfect southwest sloped exposure. All the Pinot Noir is cane-pruned to four positions, 4 spurs and 2 canes.

Mary always hand-harvests at 23.5-24 Brix, but the physiological development of the fruit - skins, seeds, flavors dictates optimal harvest, as opposed to the sugar levels. The three clones they use are Pommard 5, a Davis clone 105 which they call Stang and a field clone selection that they grew in Napa in the early 1980’s and old to Mondavi for their Oakville Pinot Noir. This clone has produced very favorable and different characteristics in the Anderson Valley than it did in Napa and is the clone that gives Elke wine its distinctive nose.

Regarding vinification, Mary’s practices can best be described as natural with as little “manipulation” as possible. She doesn’t do more than one day of cold soak, and she does not add dry ice. She doesn’t do an extended maceration, and usually press off as soon as fermentation is complete - 12 to 15 days. Elke has experimented with native yeast fermentations and using various commercial yeast, as well as experimentation with open top fermenters and tank fermentation. Mary thinks they have found a good system.

WINES | Blue Diamond Pinot Noir, Donnelly Creek Vineyard, Anderson Valley - Reflects our Burgundian winemaking philosophy combined with bright fruit characters and an earthy minerality typical of Anderson Valley Pinot Noir. This lovely Pinot is showing fantastic in the bottle right now, but will age well for years to come.

Mary Elke Pinot Noir - Donnelly Creek vineyard fruit from two clones that reflect the cool climate and soils of the Anderson Valley. (Previous blended from Donnelly fruit and others). Rich fruit flavors combine with a slight spice element and a slight mid-palate tannin to produce a “bigger” style Pinot Noir that many modern drinkers of Pinot Noir prefer.

Mary Elke Chardonnay - From Anderson Valley vineyards that usually get made into champagne but was allowed to hang on the vine for still wine production. It is clean, crisp and refreshing like the sparkler for which it was intended, but has bright fruit characters, notably apple. Not a “cocktail” Chardonnay, this wine is best enjoyed with fish, white meats, and complex dishes.