

2002 Pinot Noir

Jemrose Vineyard

Bennett Valley

Sonoma County

Bennett Valley is one of Northern California's newest appellations, and deservedly so. Previously part of the Sonoma Valley Appellation, the Bennett Valley is truly a unique terrior (translated from the French to mean a sense of place, i.e. The climate, weather patterns, soil, sunlight, drainage, etc.) It is a bit cooler than the Sonoma Valley. The Jemrose vineyard Pinot Noir grows in a small 3 acre portion of the vineyard that is in the lowest corner of this mountain valley at the foothills of Sonoma Mountain. This unique place is perfect for this delicate Pinot Noir.

The Vintage: 2002 was the second great vintage in a row. The even vintages have been weaker than the odd ones but this pattern is beginning to change. 2002 was a bit wetter than was 2001 but the summer was dry, long and relatively cool. The picking season was perfect, crop sizes were average, quality was exceptional.

We make a lot of Pinot Noir. Not a lot of any one batch but many batches from many vineyards. Besides making wine for ourselves we make wine for other wineries (Custom Crush). This gives us an opportunity to collaborate with other winemakers and make wine from many different sources. Those for whom we make wine are as dedicated to their product as are we. We wouldn't have them in the house if they weren't. This collaboration is particularly helpful when it comes to Pinot Noir because it is so fickle. We now think we have mastered it. We don't pretend to know everything but we are getting to know how it "thinks"; how it reacts to the hundreds of variables we have in our kit. All the trials and all the batches show in this Jemrose Vineyard Pinot. It is state of the art, no holds barred, no cost too much, the best of our craft.

The Jemrose is a bit more aromatic and a tiny bit more masculine to my palate than is the Cohn, Russian River Valley Pinot. While the RRV is generally recognized to be the premier appellation for Pinot (I do not disagree) I like this Bennett Valley Pinot for its more forward fruit and straightforward approach. It's got all the layered complexity and wonderfully long finish with just a hint more guts than the RRV. It's becoming a favorite at our house and I think it is under-priced.

Winemakers:	Robert Rex, Michael Browne
Harvested:	September 24, 2002
At Harvest:	25.7° Brix; 6.3g/L acid; 3.4 pH Hand sorted
Fermentation:	De-stemmed whole berries, not crushed Open top fermenters, punched by hand, Pressed out after 14 days. 90°
Yeasts:	Eparney, Assmenshausen, RC212
Barrel aging:	French oak, 5 Burgundian coopers, for 22 months
Fining	Unfined
Filtration:	Cross flow
At Bottling	14% Alcohol; SO2 12ppm
Bottled:	460 cases on August 11, 2004
Released:	April 1, 2005
Awards	90 pts Wine Enthusiast
& Reviews:	Double Gold Medal: Hilton Head

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