



CLOS DE LA TECH

SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS

2017 Domaine Valeta Sunny Slope

OVERVIEW

With caves tunneling deep into a vine-covered ridge in the Santa Cruz Mountains and vineyards so steep they have to be farmed with a unique, specially-designed tractor moved by cables, Clos de la Tech is one of the most ambitious and innovative Pinot Noir producers in California. The winery was established in 1994 and continues to be operated by TJ Rodgers, founder and retired CEO of Cypress Semiconductor, and his wife, Valeta. Some of the highlights at Clos de la Tech include extreme growing conditions, high-altitude terrain, vine-by-vine farming, high-density planting (4,150 vines per acre), low yields, innovative equipment, gravity-flow winery, whole cluster fermentations with native yeast, and no filtration.

VINEYARD

Clos de la Tech's five Pinot Noirs come from three estate vineyards: Domaine du Docteur Rodgers, Domaine Valeta, and Domaine Lois Louise. Planted in 1999, Domaine Valeta sits on a mountaintop in the Santa Cruz Mountains, 2,350 feet above the Silicon Valley. It is a challenging site that endures wind, cold and the occasional snow. Of the property's 30 acres, only 3.5 acres are planted to vines. The soils are a mix of fractured weathered sandstone and sandy loam, and the clones include 113, 114, 115 and 777.

WINE MAKING

The fruit was hand-harvested between September 2nd and September 21st, 2017. After a 5 to 10-day cold soak, the grapes underwent traditional vinification methods including foot crushing, whole cluster fermentation with native yeast, malolactic fermentation on lees and gravity transfer (no pumping). The wine was aged in Francois Frères barrels (Bertrange Forest) for 19 months and bottled unfiltered.

TASTING NOTES

We call Domine Valeta "Sunny Slope" our "delicate, fragrant Burgundian wine." The following notes are from a 30-year professional wine taster and wine letter publisher Mike Lynch: "The Sunny Slope vineyard may share the same vine spacing, clones, rootstocks, farming, and winemaking techniques as with the other properties, but its wines are remarkably different. "Sunny Slope" is the most perfumed of the Clos de la Tech wines."

Domaine Valeta tasting notes from Ron Wiegand: "Excellent Quality (***) Very fine and moderately complex (ripe plum, black cherry, red licorice, vanilla, oak). It has a supple and moderately intense flavor, with excellent balance, and a long, lightly tannic finish." Decant an hour before drinking. Best after 2022.

STATISTICS

Composition: 100% Pinot Noir

Vineyard: Domaine Valeta Sunny Slope block

Barrel Aging: 19 months in Francois Frères French oak barrels (67% new)

pH: 3.63

TA: 0.62g

Alcohol: 13.6

Production: 347 cases