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# 2017 LA PETITE GRACE MONTEREY PINOT NOIR

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Named for the golden hills of the Santa Lucia Mountain Range that frames our family-owned San Bernabe Vineyard in Monterey, Diora is inspired from “d’Or,” the French phrase meaning “golden” and bestowed on beautiful, sun-filled regions. No effort has been spared along Diora’s 30-year journey from vineyard-to-bottle. The result is an expressive wine overflowing with flavor, depth and personality and a devotion to indulgence.

## WINEMAKER’S NOTE

Dark ruby in the glass, aromas of blackberries and roasted almonds mingle with nuances of toasted marshmallows and brown sugar. Soft and velvety, robust with a voluptuous and full-bodied mouthfeel, the palate unfolds with luxurious layers of intense red cherry, and a delicate hint of blueberry (imparted by the Malbec). A long, lingering finish instills a lasting impression of rich, concentrated flavors, vanilla bean and toasted oak.

– Winemaker, James Ewart

## VINTAGE REPORT

The 2017 Monterey harvest produced rich wines of excellent quality. The growing season started out cool, but mild spring weather brought good bloom. Warm sunny days and cool nights throughout the summer allowed the grapes to gradually ripen. An unexpected heatwave in early September rapidly increased sugar production in some varieties, but temperatures dropped back to normal right before harvest. Overall, the 2017 Monterey growing season produced very intense and concentrated red wines.

## VITICULTURE

This Pinot Noir is a blend of six different vineyard blocks from San Bernabe Vineyard and the Santa Lucia Highlands. In each block, there are typically 3-4 different clones within them. Each block and clone combination adds complexity to the final blend. Just over half of this wine comes from the San Bernabe Vineyard blocks that were intentionally planted in a unique wind orientation allowing the vines to thrive off the Monterey Bay’s cool ocean breezes and to thicken the skins to heighten the luscious, round textures on the palate. This is complemented by the Santa Lucia Highlands grapes which has greater depth and structure with darker fruit. Given each of the blocks are unique with different soils, slopes, rootstocks and clones, these many differences add depth and complexity to the final blend.

## WINEMAKING

Our veteran winemaker, James Ewart, oversees the team and the small-lot winery built in the vineyard. With James at the helm, fruit for this wine was picked vine-by-vine based on ripeness over a two-week window. Most of the grapes were harvested and then processed through our new gentle destemmer and sorter, which keeps much of the whole berries intact. This is important for preserving the delicate aromas. Following a hand-sort to remove any remaining leaves, the grapes were transferred directly into small, stainless steel open-top fermenters. We then employ the “saignée” method, which refers to the process of bleeding or pulling juice from a tank of red must that is just beginning fermentation. The wine is then pumped out of the fermenting tank and back over the cap to facilitate extraction of color and flavor – often referred to as “délestage.” The must remaining in the tank has a higher proportion of grape skins to juice, resulting in a richer and more concentrated wine. This process is followed by a five-day cold soak accompanied by manual punch-downs 3-6 times throughout the day in order to extract color and tannin from the skins and to reduce the bitterness that can be imparted by the seeds.

After fermentation, wines were gently pressed into predominantly French oak barrels to undergo malolactic fermentation yielding greater color stabilization.

## BARREL REGIME

This wine was aged in predominantly French barrels (of which 28% were new). Our favorite cooper is François Frères which adds dark toasty notes and gives the wine nice length. A portion of these barrels had their heads toasted to really accentuate those toasty aromas. The wine spent more than ten months in barrels before blending when James tasted and selected the lots for the final Diora Pinot Noir La Petite Grace blend. A small touch of Malbec was added to lengthen the palate.

## PAIRING

Richly-flavored and full-bodied, this Pinot Noir does not shy away from heartier fare. Serve with a dry-rubbed porterhouse steak, roast duck – the pairings are endless.



## TECHNICAL NOTES

Varietal: 98% Pinot Noir, 2% Malbec

2017 vintage

Monterey appellation

~ half from Santa Lucia Highlands

~ half from San Bernabe Vineyard

Aged more than 10 months in predominantly French oak (28% new)

pH: 3.6

TA: 0.57 g/100ml

Alcohol: 14.5% by volume

15,800 cases produced (9L)

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