

# Belle Glos

THE WORD BALADE, FRENCH FOR “WANDERING,” IS A FITTING TERM FOR OUR ANNUAL EXPLORATION OF SINGLE-VINEYARD PINOT NOIR BLOCKS ON THE WEST COAST. EACH VINTAGE, WE WILL BOTTLE ONLY THE MOST COMPELLING AND NUANCED EXPRESSION OF PINOT NOIR FROM A SINGLE SELECTED VINEYARD AND RELEASE IT AS A LIMITED BOTTLING, RESTAURANT-FOCUSED.

## SINGLE VINEYARD SURVEY

During the 2023 growing season, one vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands captivated us with its lovely fruit flavors, vibrant acidity, gorgeous color, and amazing complexity. The Santa Lucia Highlands appellation boasts the unique combination of abundant sunshine and a truly cool climate.

## THE 2023 GROWING SEASON

The 2023 vintage began with above-normal winter rainfall, followed by an unusually dry and warm period from January through March, prompting bud break two weeks early. Vine growth was very uniform during May and July, and the grapevine experienced fir bloom and fruit set. Summer's hot days were balanced by cool evenings, preserving natural acidity. Veraison started in early July and finished quickly by late July. To prevent dehydration from an early September heatwave, we began harvesting two weeks early, completing harvest by mid-September.

## WINEMAKING

We harvested early in the morning so the fruit would arrive at the winery while the grapes were still cool to preserve their vineyard-fresh flavors. After destemming (but not crushing) the berries, we cold-soaked the must for 14 days to soften the skins and allow for ideal extraction. During fermentation in a combination of closed and open-top stainless steel fermenters, we used both punch-down and pump-over techniques to extract color and phenolics. We aged the wine in 100% French oak (60% new) for up to 12 months. After the wine underwent malolactic fermentation, we racked it twice before bottling.

## TASTING NOTES

### 2023 BALADE PINOT NOIR

*Santa Lucia Highlands  
Monterey County*

Rich crimson in color with fragrant aromas of blackberry, sage, cherry, and hints of rich dark chocolate. Bold and elegant on the palate with boysenberry pie, black currant jam, dark plum, and subtle notes of ground nutmeg. Balanced and structured, this wine has beautiful acidity that lingers through to a long, mouthwatering finish.

*To me, Balade is the  
expression of a specific place  
and a very definitive and  
memorable moment in time.*

*Joseph F. Wagner*  
Fifth Generation Winemaker  
Joseph Wagner

