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## **PASSION FOR PINOT**

### *A Personal Reflection*

As happens so often in the wine business, our passion for Pinot Noir began with an introduction that led to a wonderful friendship. One of the first tastings ever held at Far Niente featured five decades of the magnificent Burgundies of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, presented by Lalou Bize-Leroy. Through their newly established friendship with Lalou, Far Niente proprietors Gil and Beth Nickel secured some of those unbelievable old wines for their cellar, and over the years we drank many great Burgundies together. The wines were a revelation to us and led to much travel and exploration in the region, along the way making more friends and refining our conviction to one day produce our own Pinot Noir.

Experimentation followed. We made Pinot Noir from the Central Coast and Carneros in the mid-1980s, but the wines just didn't fit with our Napa Valley Cabernet roots. Many years later, we found our way to the Russian River Valley, first by drinking some of the marvelous wines coming from this relatively new region. We were hooked. Yet, finding great grapes in the Russian River Valley wasn't going to happen quickly. As winery partners and landowners, we knew that owning vineyards was a key to our success, and we wouldn't have it any other way with our Pinot Noir. As luck—combined with our passion for Pinot—would have it, we acquired two remarkable vineyards in the Russian River Valley and finally our decades-long journey to making Pinot Noir came full circle.

*More*



**ENROUTE WINERY**

**RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY PINOT NOIR**



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We have covered a lot of ground since those first Pinots we made in the 1980s. We have driven back roads amongst vineyards all over Europe, California and Oregon. We've had steely eyed conversations, in obscure countryside restaurants, about our personal and business futures. We've enjoyed amazing wines in great winery cellars and in the homes of some of the world's greatest vintners. Our years together have always been about learning, challenging and realizing our greatest goals. We're hopeful that will continue for many years to come. After all, where are you headed if you're not en route to fulfilling your dreams?

– BETH NICKEL, ERIK NICKEL, JEREMY NICKEL, DIRK HAMPSON AND LARRY MAGUIRE