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FAR NIENTE PARTNERS INTRODUCE ENROUTE WINERY IN THE RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

New Winery Devoted to Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

SEBASTOPOL, CA The partners of Napa Valley's Far Niente winery have announced the creation of "EnRoute," a winery specializing in the production of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. EnRoute was introduced in May 2009 and its inaugural release shipped nationally in September.

EnRoute debuted with "Les Pommiers," a Russian River Valley Pinot Noir from the 2007 vintage. Named for the apple orchards that once flourished in the region, *Les Pommiers* reflects a blend of vineyards primarily from Green Valley and the upper Middle Reach area of the Russian River Valley AVA.

The name, EnRoute, is a nod to the journey the partners have taken on their way to producing Pinot Noir.

"We first became enchanted with Pinot Noir in the 1980s in Burgundy. While Far Niente's vision is exclusively focused on Napa Valley Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon, we still enjoyed travelling and tasting the great Pinot Noirs of the world. Eventually, Nickel & Nickel's single-vineyard program gave us the freedom to set foot in the Russian River Valley. A few years into producing wines from Russian River, we decided to make a serious commitment to the region, acquired two remarkable vineyards and established EnRoute, devoted to Russian River Valley Pinot Noir," said EnRoute co-founder Larry Maguire.

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ENROUTE WINERY

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY PINOT NOIR



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The partners, who include Beth Nickel, Erik Nickel, Jeremy Nickel, Dirk Hampson and Larry Maguire, jointly own EnRoute and sister wineries Far Niente, Dolce and Nickel & Nickel. They purchased two vineyards in the Russian River Valley specifically for EnRoute. Graton Vineyard is located in the Green Valley AVA within the greater Russian River Valley AVA. Acquired as an abandoned apple orchard, the 21.5-acre parcel was groomed and planted to Pinot clones Pommard 5, Mt. Eden, Swan, 2A and Dijon clones 115 and 777 in the area's renowned Goldridge sandy loam soils.

The partnership subsequently purchased the celebrated Amber Ridge Vineyard in the upper Middle Reach area of the northern Russian River Valley. Located on rolling terrain off Starr Road, 22 acres were planted to Pinot Noir in 2000 on bilateral vertical trellising. The clonal mix includes Pommard 5, Calera and Dijon clones 115, 667 and 777.

The partners have been involved with Manzana Vineyard in Green Valley since it was planted in 2001. Eight acres of the east-facing hillside vineyard, planted to Pinot Noir Dijon clones 114, 115 and Pommard 5, contribute to the *Les Pommiers* blend.

"We have always believed in vineyard ownership as a way to produce the best fruit for our wines," said Dirk Hampson, EnRoute co-founder. "In addition to the fine vineyards we own, we are also fortunate to have good relationships with some of the region's long-established growers."

Winemaking is overseen by Director of Winemaking Dirk Hampson, with Winemaker Andrew Delos, who spent three years as the assistant winemaker at Nickel & Nickel. Delos previously was the assistant winemaker at Pelligrini Family Winery where he worked with Olivet Lane Vineyard, a source of many notable Russian River Pinot Noirs, and gained exposure to other Russian River wines at the winery's custom crush operation. The EnRoute wines are crushed, fermented and barrel aged at a separate facility in Sebastopol.

EnRoute "Les Pommiers" sells for a nationally suggested retail price of \$50.

For further inquiries, please visit the EnRoute Web site at www.enroutewinery.com, or contact the winery at 707-944-2412 or pinot@enroutewinery.com.