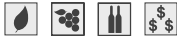




MACPHAIL WINES

Healdsburg, California



James MacPhail, like a few other micro-boutique, hands-on winemakers, is pretty much a one-man show. He works personally with growers, makes his own winemaking decisions, performs his own cellar and laboratory work, and handles most sales and marketing directly. He is a native son of the North Bay: his father's family owned a chain of appliance and building materials stores in Marin and Sonoma counties until the early 1990s; his mother came from dairy ranching lineage in western Marin. MacPhail grew up with wine on the table, earned degrees in business (from the University of Redlands) and hotel administration, and decided to make a business of wine when he reached his mid-thirties. In 1995 he moved to Healdsburg; worked four years at Quivira Vineyards in Dry Creek Valley, migrating from the cellar to the tasting room and then to sales and marketing; and supplemented this experience with production-oriented stints at Unti (a Dry Creek producer of zinfandel and syrah) and Gary Farrell (see **GARY FARRELL WINES**). As time passed, he focused increasingly on pinot noir, which had been his father's passion.

In 2002, MacPhail made the first vintage of his own wine: 345 cases of pinot noir from the Toulouse Vineyard northwest of Philo in Anderson Valley, which had been planted in 1999 to supply Pacific Echo's sparkling wine program, and 60 cases of

Russian River Valley pinot from the Vin Noy Vineyard on Westside Road. The wine was made in the Tandem Winery facility in Sebastopol, where MacPhail was the launch customer for Greg & Greg's custom-crush services. MacPhail expects to break ground in 2007 on a small, dedicated production facility outside Healdsburg, co-located with his home and office.

WINEMAKING NOTES

With the exception of the Russian River Valley wine, which was made only in 2002 and 2003, and a Sonoma Coast blend made in 2004, all MacPhail wines, all of which are pinot noir, are vineyard-designated. The Toulouse Vineyard wine has been made in every vintage. A wine from the Sangiacomo family's Roberts Road vineyard (also used by **TANDEM WINERY**) was made in 2003 and 2005, and one from the Pratt Vineyard in the Sebastopol Hills was made beginning in 2004. A second Anderson Valley wine was added to the portfolio in 2004. In this vintage it was sourced from the Fratney Shams Vineyard near Boonville; in 2005 the source was a "new" (i.e., ca. 1995 planting) block in the well-known Ferrington Vineyard, which is further described in the **WILLIAMS SELYEM** profile. Grapes are hand-harvested at night at Brix levels ranging from 23.5 to 27.5, are entirely destemmed ("so far"), and are cold-soaked for three to five days. Part of each lot is fermented using resident yeast in a six-ton stainless open-top tank, whereas the balance of each lot is made in fruit bins, which must sometimes be inoculated. The must is pressed before it is completely dry and goes to barrel without settling, where the lees are stirred until the primary fermentation has completed. Of the barrels, 35 percent are new each year, and the inventory relies on eight different coopers to "create layers" in the finished wine. After nine to ten months

in barrel, the wines are bottled without fining or filtration, but they are not released until they have accumulated at least nine months of bottle age. Although MacPhail pinots are unmistakably ripe wines by design, often approaching (and occasionally exceeding) 15° alcohol, they stop short of excessive sweetness, do not taste overripe, and reserve some organoleptic space for floral and spicy notes, and for earthy undertones. These are nicely built wines with well-managed tannins.

TASTING NOTES

2005 *Pratt Vineyard (tasted in 2007)*:

Rich and deep but still-transparent magenta; aromas of coffee beans, cocoa, Italian plum, and dark cherry; very sweet, cherry-candy-like, then flavors of chocolate éclair on the palate; a very fruit-driven, flavor-forward, and “crowd-pleasing” wine.

2005 *Toulouse Vineyard (tasted in 2007)*:

Transparent rosy-garnet; aromas of earth, barrel char, and cherry-raspberry fruit; intense cherry-raspberry in the mouth, with black pepper, clove, and some licorice; hint of grip and edge; nice structure and mid-palate weight.

2005 *Ferrington Vineyard (tasted in 2007)*: Brilliant, very transparent rosy-garnet; floral, tar and juniper berry aromas; rich and dark in the mouth with infused flowers, black fruit, black licorice, and some tar; some sensation of Barolo; very slightly sweeter mouth-feel than the Toulouse bottling; good balance.

2002 *Toulouse Vineyard (tasted in 2007)*:

The inaugural vintage of MacPhail; a medium-dark, very red ruby color; red fruits, gum camphor, boot polish, and some beeswax on the nose; huge concentration and substantial mid-palate weight with considerable fine-grained tannins; dense, mouth-coating, and grippy with a smoky cherry character that lingers.