



Hello,

DARLING

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The Fall Release

A Letter From The Winemaker

October 1, 2021



Dear friends,

With great excitement, we bring to you our 2021 Fall Release!

First, I'd like to share some wonderful news. On June 29, Ashley safely delivered our beautiful baby boy, Desmond Toby Darling. He entered our world a little early, so after a two-week hospital stay he gained enough strength and weight to come home to Sonoma and has been thriving ever since. Mylo has adjusted well to the new addition, first a bit curious and now proudly becoming a guardian!

The name "Desmond" came about when Ashley and I first met; we heard it in The Beatles song "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da" and thought how sweet a name it was. We quickly agreed if we ever went the distance we would name a little boy just that. Well, we certainly went the distance! Toby, the middle name, is after my own father. If you've been lucky enough to spend some time with him you know well I'm proud to attach his name to the next generation of Darlings.

I can't put into words how proud I am of Ashley and how lucky I feel to be by her side. Not only has she brought our beautiful son into the world, she has done so with incredible selflessness and grace from the very beginning. We knew early on that Desmond may come prior to full term, and even with that knowledge she was steadfast and strong as she moved through doctors appointments, hospital stays, bed rest, an emergency c-section and two tough weeks in the NICU. Truly, I am in awe each day.

Desmond is growing so fast. I am with him far less than Ashley right now so these small growth spurts seem massive to me. He is just starting to engage and smile which has been thrilling. I can't wait to pick him up when I get home from the winery each day (apologies to Ashley as I can't help but come in and rile him up) and am very much looking forward to finishing harvest in a couple of weeks and spending some much needed time at home with he and Ashley both. I still can't really believe he is ours.

Thanks to her, I have been able to put all my energy into making our 2021 wines as best as they possibly can be. This motivation of course stems from delivering the best we can to our customers, but this year there is some joyful added energy around these wines: each day at the winery I daydream about opening the wines with Desmond someday and reliving the time leading up to and after he arrived into this world. I imagine (hope) the wines age well and he can taste and relive the vintage with me and be proud of my tireless efforts.

In the following pages you will find information, stories, and more surrounding our pivotal 2020 vintage. We are so proud of these wines that come from what proved to be an unprecedented year, inside or outside of the wine industry, and they are proof that "in the midst of darkness, light persists."

We thank you so very much for your continued support of DARLING and our growing family.

Tom Darling
Owner, Winemaker



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About the Vintage

Not only was Covid-19 affecting the entire industry, California experienced record-breaking destruction from wildfires that started months earlier than in years past—while everyone’s grapes were still hanging on the vine.

In August, as the LNU lightning complex fire progressed, day by day we heard from each of our grower partners informing us that their entire crop had been compromised. Some had crop insurance, some did not. From a business and personal standpoint, it was a horrible position to be in for everyone involved.

What are the concerns surrounding wildfires and wine-making? There are many difficult factors to consider, most of which are relatively unstudied. What we do know is that smoke can ruin an entire crop in just 24 hours if it is primary (new smoke from a nearby fire) and blankets the vineyard all the way to ground level. We also know that it binds to the sugars in the grape and is released post-fermentation. This means you can taste grapes after they have been affected by smoke and not taste any smoke taint at all, only to harvest, ferment, age, and bottle that wine and find out a few months later your entire wine is ruined and undrinkable.

Instead of giving up on the vintage, we got resourceful. We quickly pivoted and reached out to as many contacts as we could dig up. Three hours north, in Mendocino County, we found untainted fruit. And so, we bring to you two new wines which have expanded our portfolio across Sonoma, Marin, and now Mendocino counties.

We adjusted the label to tell the story of place. The color green depicts the deep redwood forests that impact these vineyards. We’ve stayed true to our cool-climate oceanic inspiration, ensuring these new vineyard sites are still mere miles from the Pacific Ocean.

We produced four delicious, smoke-free wines from the year 2020, two of which you have received today. We hope they serve as a time capsule to remember and cherish the fullness of life.



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Chardonnay

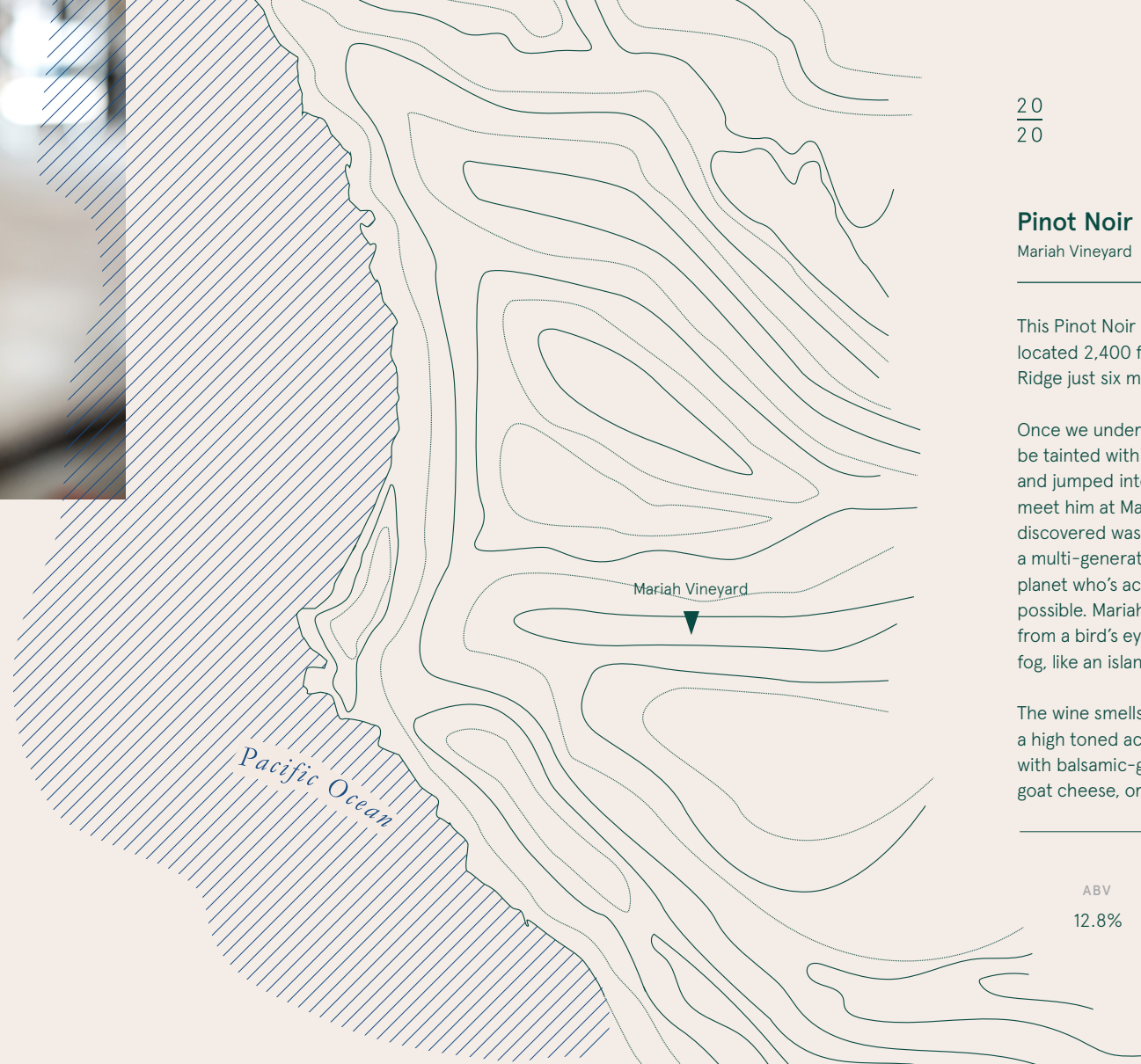
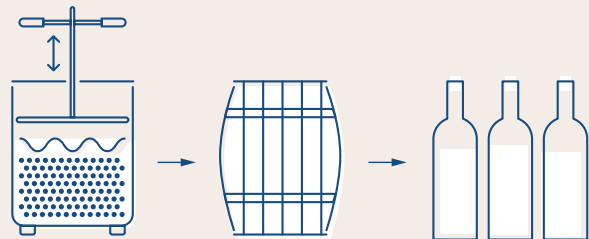
Sonoma Coast

This Sonoma Coast Chardonnay comes from an own-rooted, 40 year-old dry-farmed vineyard in the Northwest corner of the Sonoma Coast. Believe it or not, the Meyer's Grade fire broke out just a few days before we harvested this fruit but because the wind direction hadn't changed yet, we were able to get the fruit off the vine just in time. 2020 was a warm vintage, so we decided to bottle this earlier than normal in order to preserve tension and brightness in the wine. It tastes of crushed seashell, fresh lemon and pear skin, with a citrus-driven texture. This wine will pair perfectly with a spread of your favorite cheeses, raw oysters or shellfish, smoked trout or roasted chicken—a variety of dishes or on its own over connection and conversation.

ABV
12.7%

PROCESS

4 months neutral French oak
4 months stainless steel
unfined, unfiltered



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Pinot Noir

Mariah Vineyard

This Pinot Noir is from a Certified Regenerative vineyard located 2,400 feet above sea level, on top of Mendocino Ridge just six miles from the Pacific Ocean. Whoa.

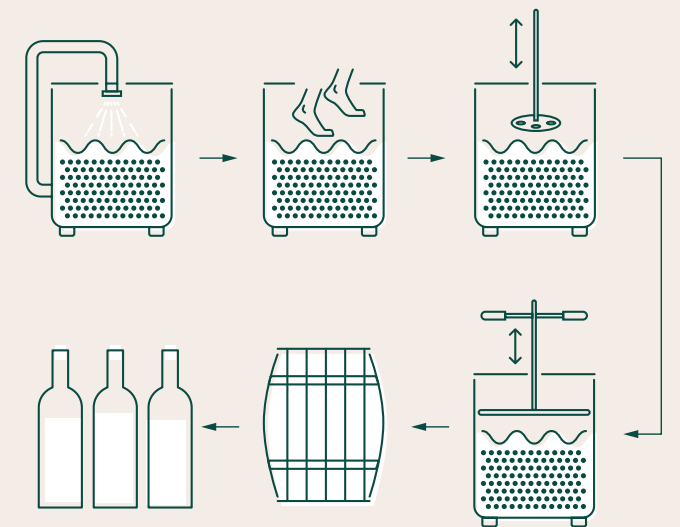
Once we understood that all of our Pinot Noir sites would be tainted with smoke, we quickly reconnected with Dan and jumped into the car to drive three hours north to meet him at Mariah. We're glad we did, because what we discovered was not only an incredible vineyard site, but a multi-generational family dedicated to the future of our planet who's actively taking steps to farm as organic as possible. Mariah is known as "an island in the sky" because from a bird's eye view the vineyard sits hovering above the fog, like an island floating amongst the clouds.

The wine smells of flowers, cherries, forest floor and has a high toned acid-driven texture. This wine pairs nicely with balsamic-glazed pork chops, grilled asparagus and goat cheese, or mushroom risotto.

ABV
12.8%

PROCESS

10 months neutral French oak
100% whole cluster
unfined, unfiltered



Grower Feature

As you know, we do not work with any corporate or large-scale vineyards. We only source from privately-owned, small family farms. We'd like to share a bit about the incredible story behind this shipment's Pinot Noir grower, Mariah Vineyards.

From left to right:
Michael Frey, Nicole Frey,
Dan Dooling, Vicky Dooling



1979

Dan Dooling planted Mariah Vineyards on what was formerly an untouched mountaintop with rich, well-draining soils set above the fog line in a cool coastal climate.

1983

By 1983 they harvested the first fruit and gave birth to their firstborn, Nicole.

1990's

In the 90's, Mariah became a certified California sustainable vineyard.

2021

Today, Nicole and her husband "Swiss" Michael, who's originally from Switzerland, are leading the charge for future generations by establishing regenerative farming practices and obtaining the "Land To Market" certification, the world's first verified regenerative sourcing solution.

What Is Regenerative Farming?

Regenerative farmers employ practices aimed to restore soil health and increase organic matter over time, while they sequester carbon below and above ground. They also protect watersheds, facilitate biodiversity, improve animal welfare and provide economic stability and fairness for human workers.

So, we send a huge Thank You to everyone at Mariah Vineyards for the regenerative work they do twelve months a year, seven days a week, morning and night.

Environmental Impact Scale



Your Tasting Notes

Gather with friends and fill in the blanks as you sip and savor your new wines.

Chardonnay Notes

Upon opening, the wine smells like _____

My first few sips taste of _____

After 15 minutes, the nose has evolved into _____

I'm eating _____ with this wine

Who'd you open the wine with? _____

After 30 minutes, now I smell and taste _____

Pinot Noir Notes

Upon opening, the wine smells like _____

My first few sips taste of _____

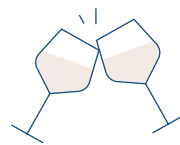
After 15 minutes, the nose has evolved into _____

I'm eating _____ with this wine

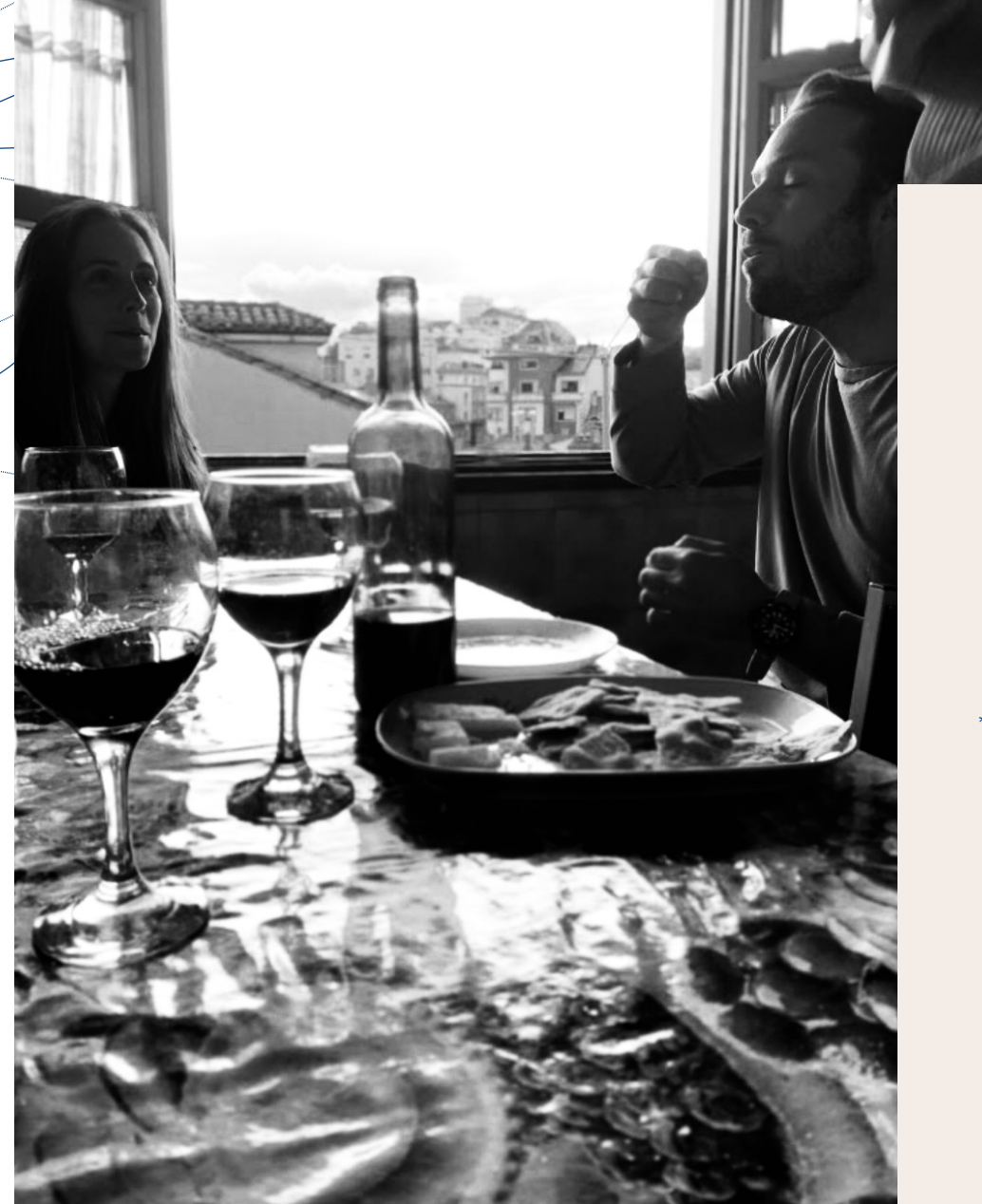
Who'd you open the wine with? _____

After 30 minutes, now I smell and taste _____

Joie de vivre



Send us a picture with you and the bottle [@darlingwines](https://twitter.com/darlingwines) or hello@darlingwines.com



QUICK TIPS

Tom & Ashley's Advice

How should you remove a cork through a wax seal?

Pull it straight through! Simply insert the tip of your wine key through the wax, turn the corkscrew downwards, then pull the cork out like normal. We use the highest quality wax so that you experience a clean break without a crumbly mess.

**Pro Tip: If you store your wine in a cold fridge, remove it twenty minutes prior to opening to allow not only the wine to warm up but also the wax. This way you'll have an even cleaner break.*

How long should you age these wines?

We say you have two options. The Chardonnay is ready to drink now, and it will also age between 3-4 years. So, it's up to you!

The Pinot Noir could also be enjoyed now, and it will get even better over time. If you choose to cellar a few bottles, it will age gracefully for 5-7 years. Decanting is recommended!

Can you store these wines in the refrigerator after opening?

Yes! These wines will last in your fridge for up to 3-4 days.

Need more wine?

We securely save your shipping information so you can simply email hello@darlingwines.com to reorder. Just tell us the quantities and we'll have it shipped directly to your door!



Who We Are

Handcrafted, extraordinary,
minimal-intervention wines for
those who seek the best for
themselves and their communities.

With a modern and open mind, we are committed to people
and place, while rooted in traditions that stand the test of time.



www.darlingwines.com
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