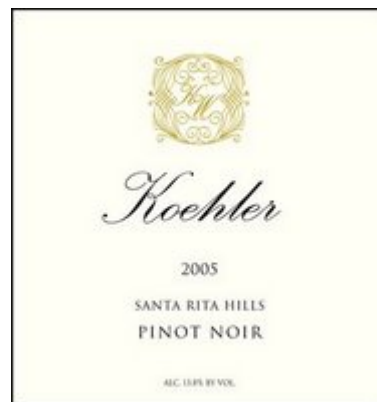


Santa Ynez wine tasting- July 2008 Koehler Winery

On this trip we stopped at Firestone, Fess Parker's, Koehler and Alisal Cellars (a wine bar/shop in Solvang with some nice wine tasting flights. They also have beer and sake flights). This was our first visit to Koehler and it was the star of the trip. Everyone in our party were wonderfully surprised and excited by all the tasting selections.



My favorites-

- 2005 Magia Nera- A 33% Cabernet & 67% Sangiovese blend. Coffee, tar, clove and cedar on the nose deliciously give way to a luxuriant palate of red raspberry and clove. Balanced acidity and soft tannins. 2008 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition won Gold Best of Class.
- 2005 Syrah Estate- A blend of three clones grown here on the estate, this Syrah is ripe and focused, generous with its blackberry and white pepper aromas and flavors, which echo nicely on the firm finish. Robert Parker's Wine Advocate scored this wine 93 pts. (The Wine Advocate "... the structure and muscle of a great Hermitage from France's Rhône Valley.") now I liked this wine but I don't get this rating, I think I need to buy a bottle decant it and give it a real try at home.

(over)

- 2005 Pinot Noir Santa Barbara County- Beautiful strawberry and Bing cherry notes on the nose yield to more developed earthiness, leather, vanilla and raspberry on the palate. It has soft tannins supported by bright acidity. 90 Points, Wine Enthusiast Magazine "With a lightly silky texture and dry finish, it's quite an elegant sipper."
- 2005 Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills- This was my top pick of the day. Pinot for the connoisseur. Cherry, strawberry, cinnamon stick with a bit of barnyard and earthy notes on the nose introduce a palate of red fruits, nutmeg and pipe tobacco. Surprisingly laid back for a SRH, more reminiscent of a French style pinot.

I believe these wines are some of the first releases under new Koehler winemaker Chris Stanton. Stanton has outstanding credentials including his much heralded successes during his time as winemaker at Mayo Family Winery.

We brought home some of the Santa Barbara County and SRH Pinots, I wish I'd grabbed the Syrah too.

The winery cats are very cool and did I mention the Emus?

-- Posted by Mike Jacobs