

# **Margins 'Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir' 2020**

**Producer** - Megan Bell

**Provenance:** Santa Clara Valley, California

**Farming:** Organic

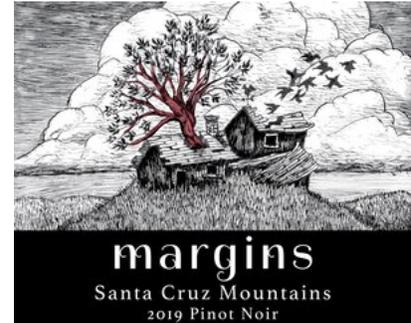
**Grape(s):** 100% Pinot Noir

**Vineyard:** Makjavich vineyard she cofarms in the Santa Cruz Mountains at 1300 ft elevation and surrounded by redwood trees.

**Vintage:** In 2020, Megan doubled her production, moved to a new winery and was forced to evacuate her home due to wildfires just after the first pick. The growing season also presented challenges with heatwaves and a powdery mildew pressure across the Santa Cruz Mountains, she was obliged to pick earlier and find ways to manage alkalinity.

**Fermentation/ Aging:** destemmed and fermented in macro bins with one punch down per day. Pressed after 3 days into neutral barrel for 10 months aging on gross lees.

**Sulfite:** 20 ppm a week before bottling



## **The Producer:**

“Complicated things don’t really interest me,” Megan muses “I want wine to be thought of as something that’s very not complicated - that’s something that affected me a lot at the beginning.” Megan’s interest in wine evolved from high-school brewing experiments into studies at UC Davis. From the beginning, she’s found the pall of mystery that hangs over wine to be discouraging and totally unnecessary. Her project, initially funded through a crowdsourcing campaign, is dedicated to the less evangelized regions of California and their scrappy mom ‘n pop vineyards. The wines are delicious, totally unfussy and super clean.

## **The Vineyard:**

The grapes come from Makjavich Vineyard that Megan farms with owner Larry Makjavich. “I love it there,” Megan says of the steep, south facing slope with a few out to the sea 5 miles away. Planted around 2011, the vineyard is mostly Pinot Noir with Merlot and a random half row of Petit Sirah and Cabernet Sauvignon that Megan adds to different wines in different years. The soils are fine, loamy sandstone and shale with more clay at the bottom and more sandy soils at the top.

Since joining Larry in the vineyard, Megan has been changing the training method of the Pinot Noir from spur to cane pruning to account for the excessively high vigor of the site. “Vegetal growth is out of control,” she says but other than that there are very few farming inputs. “We don’t do a lot of composting or tillage, some rows might get ripped every 5-10 years but there’s not a lot of inputs besides managing for mildew.” Makjavich’s property is one of the first registered organic farms in the country.

2020 was an especially challenging year for Megan. She moved into a new winery space with a friend which brought with it the joys of permitting and licensing paperwork, and doubled her production from 1,000 cases to 2,000 cases without hiring additional help. ‘I didn’t quite realize how much that was going to be for one person’ she told us. To further complicate matters the neighborhood where she lives was evacuated due to wildfires after the very first pick. With 27 tons left to pick and process, Megan was living in a friend’s guest room while managing a new workflow in a new space.

**The Winery:**

During the fermentation of macerated wines she uses a metal tool for gentle, daily punchdowns. “I’m literally punching each section of the cap once,” she says “not mixing it up, not trying to introduce air. Very very gentle maceration, to get as little extraction as possible.” For Pinot Noir Megan only macerates for 3 days before pressing into neutral barrels for aging. ‘My goal is really to be making super light pinot that almost between rose and red wine. Especially in santa cruz I find that you can get fairly masculin, either super iodine or irony from one part and the lower part (where she is) tends to be super green and resinous.’ The wine was barrel aged on gross lees for 10 months. Base wines are racked into tank with an addition of 20 ppm sulfite and bottled a week after without fining or filtration.

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