

Illa Pinot Noir 2005

It is fitting that I keep the best until last. This is a Pinot Noir 2005 made to celebrate my sister Illa who left us in 2005. The wine is labeled Sonoma Coast and is a small lot of 600 magnum bottles sold in a two magnum bottle case. Why two magnums? Well because the label is a special one and having two different versions to choose from, and not being able to decide, I decided to use both. The wine is the same, the labels different. They both figure my sister and her bantam rooster, Hey Nonny Nonny.

I think the wine is very good. Both the grape grower/winery owner, Bob Pellegrini and winemaker, Kevin Hamel were friends of my sister. The blend is three barrels of Olivet Lane Russian River Pinot plus one barrel of Kevin Hamel's Sonoma Coast wine. Hence the Sonoma Coast appellation. If you really want to know the geeky stuff, we can send this with the wine.

This is a wine for celebration. Illa liked very good Pinot Noir and this is certainly that. It is also a wine that mirrors her. It is elegant with a lot of strength. It is straightforward yet gracious; decisive yet not harsh. Alcohol is 14.3%, typical for a ripe Pinot yet not overbearing. It has the possibility of aging well. Since it is in magnums, the occasion of opening one must be special. It is wine for drinking in company, something Illa enjoyed. It is the kind of wine that when finished, you regret there not being just a bit more to last a bit longer, to continue the pleasure of the moment.

The label's artist is Zbigniew Kozikowski, a Polish artist, living in Sacramento who has a very special style. Done as an oil painting, the colored version of the label is more to his own taste. The other version, very figurative, is something done on the spur of the moment, and unusual, since the artists rarely does figures. He prefers to express feeling in changes of light: color.