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Freeman Vineyard picks up inspiration from Burgundy

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Photo: John Storey, Special To The Chronicle

The vineyards at the Freeman Winery in Sebastopol, Calif. are seen on February 2nd, 2019.

Ken and Akiko Freeman started Freeman Vineyard and Winery in 2001 after being inspired by the fine wines of Burgundy.

With two estate vineyards, Gloria and Yu-ki, the Freemans devote themselves to cool-

climate, coastal Pinot Noir, working with other sites within the Sonoma Coast and Russian River Valley to produce five unique Pinots, as well as one Chardonnay from Hawk Hill Vineyard nearby. Everything is made in small quantities with the utmost attention.

Tokyo native Akiko makes the wines, having apprenticed alongside consulting winemaker Ed Kurtzman since the winery's inception.

Ken has been actively involved in the West Sonoma Coast Vintners, which has applied for a new appellation to be formed, incorporating vineyards like his that lie within a certain proximity of the Pacific Ocean.

Visits (\$30) are held in the wine caves and are by appointment from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. They're private and intimate and, in addition to tasting the wines, visitors will have the chance to experience the Freeman's small-lot winery and Gloria Vineyard next door.

WHAT TO TRY: The two estate Pinot Noirs are well worth trying side-by-side if possible. The Gloria is from a hillside spot once planted to apples that the Freemans named after its original owner. Yu-ki, from a high-elevation site above Occidental that is surrounded by redwoods, is spicy and sublime. Akiko's Cuvée is a selection of the best barrels each year.

INSIDE INFO: From Freeman it would be a shame not to head just a tiny bit farther to Freestone's Wild Flour Bread Bakery for brick-oven breads, scones, fougasse, flatbreads and sticky buns.