

BRIEF HISTORY OF PINOT BLANC

Pinot blanc, like Pinot gris, is a genetic mutation of Pinot noir that has been cultivated throughout Northern Europe for centuries. Pinot blanc is planted widely in Alsace, as well as Germany (as Weissburgunder), and northern Italy (as Pinot bianco), and in smaller amounts in pockets of Burgundy and Eastern Europe.

Pinot blanc was first planted in Oregon in 1967, but there are still fewer than 200 acres in production here. Four acres were planted at Bethel Heights in 1992.

Pinot blanc is widely appreciated wherever it is grown for its great versatility with food.

THE 2016 VINTAGE

From start to finish 2016 was the earliest vintage we have ever seen in the Willamette Valley. At Bethel Heights we were almost a month ahead of “normal” at every turning point in the season.

The growing season was warmer and wetter than usual, leading to veraison beginning in early August. Harvest started on August 27, the first time we ever harvested fruit in August. Our last fruit was harvested on September 24, the first time we ever finished harvest before the end of September.

Surprisingly, the wines of 2016 are not the uniformly opulent offerings one would expect from a year defined by its precocity. Ripeness came early, but not at the expense of purity and elegance.

BETHEL HEIGHTS VINEYARD
6060 BETHEL HEIGHTS RD NW
SALEM, OREGON 97304 U.S.A.
(503) 581-2262
www.bethelheights.com



2016 PINOT BLANC • ÉLEVAGE

LIVE Certified Sustainable

Harvest date: September 19, 2016

Grapes at harvest: Brix 22.6, pH 3.25, TA 6.3 gr/liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.3 %, pH 3.3, TA 5.8 gr/liter

No residual sugar

Barrel aged 16 months in French oak

41 cases produced, bottled unfined January 2018

WINEMAKER NOTES

This special selection of estate grown Pinot blanc receives a prolonged *élevage* (finishing in barrel) following its primary fermentation. This wine was aged 16 months on the lees in one neutral and one once-filled 60-gallon oak barrel without malolactic fermentation, producing a broader, richer wine showcasing more savory characteristics and subtle oak spice without sacrificing the acidity that has long been a hallmark of Bethel Heights.

FOOD PAIRING

A full-bodied Pinot blanc like this one will provide a rich and subtle backdrop for any food it accompanies, but for a special treat try pairing it with some of the richer specialties of its Alsatian homeland – such as escargot! Or onion tart, or creamy cheeses like the notable Alsatian Muenster.

Winemaker Ben Casteel found “a perfect match!” for this wine when he served it with *Ricotta Gnocchi with Asparagus, Peas and Morels*. (Find the recipe at bonappetit.com)