

## THE CASTEEL PINOT NOIR

Over the past twenty years Bethel Heights has been known for limited bottlings of distinctive vineyard and block designated Pinot noir wines. In 2002 we took a new path and produced our first Casteel Pinot Noir, a blend of barrels from several different blocks, selected to express the epitome of that particular vintage at Bethel Heights. This is our only Pinot noir that carries our family name rather than a place name, which gives us considerable poetic license to select our favorite barrels from each vintage.

## THE 2017 VINTAGE

2017 was our sixth very warm vintage in a row. Fortunately we had quite a lot of rain in the winter and early spring; total rainfall for the year was almost 20 inches above normal. The summer overall was hot and dry, punctuated by a couple of significant hot spells in August and early September with consecutive days over 100 degrees, but September cooled down mercifully, with a few brief rain events that helped maintain freshness in the vineyard through the final ripening phase.

“I feel that the 2017 wines have the best natural balance we have seen out of a warm vintage since 2012. In spite of the heat the wines have terrific acidity, relatively low alcohol, and the different parts of our Estate show their personalities without being muddled by vintage.” Ben Casteel

### 95 JAMESSUCKLING.COM

A beautifully composed wine from the outset, offering ripe dark cherries, swathed in assertively toasty complexity with wild herbs and bracken. This is really fresh with a handsomely savory thread. The palate has a smooth, sleek and polished feel with a seamless build of tannin that carries plenty of rich flavor into the defined and powerful finish. Drink or hold.



## 2017 PINOT NOIR CASTEEL

Harvest date: October 7, 2017

Fruit source: Bethel Heights West 114 and 115

Grapes at harvest: Brix 23.7, pH 3.08, TA 7.6 gr/liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.3%, pH 3.39, TA 6.1 gr/liter

Barrel aged 15 months in French oak, 47% new barrels

400 cases produced

Bottled unfinned in January 2019

**VINIFICATION:** All the fruit was hand sorted and destemmed without crushing. After a 3-day cold soak, the fermenters warmed naturally and were gently pumped over once or twice a day at the onset of fermentation. After fermentation reached peak temperatures (82-88 F), the new wine was aerated once a day, and pressed at dryness. After settling, the new wine was racked to barrels, and aged 16 months on lees.

**WINEMAKER NOTES:** The Casteel Pinot Noir is always intended to be the best expression of our estate in each vintage. The age and maturity of our vineyard has allowed the blend to remain remarkably consistent since the 2008 vintage, but this hasn't stopped us from trying new things as the years go by. Two blocks planted in 1994 and 1996 on the most beautiful slope on the west side of the vineyard have given us some of the most compelling wines year after year, and they are always better together. Since 2014 they have been the key components in the Casteel blend. Starting in 2017 they even shared the same fermentation tank.