

BETHEL HEIGHTS FLAT BLOCK

The Flat Block is a three-acre section of our Estate vineyard planted in 1979 on a flat rocky bench in the center of a south-facing slope. The soil is volcanic, very shallow and gravelly. The vines are 100% own-rooted Pommard selection, some of the last own-rooted Pinot noir remaining in the Willamette Valley.

THE 2018 VINTAGE

2018 was the sixth vintage in a row defined by heat in the Willamette Valley. Following a wet winter, the spring and summer were very dry and warm, leading to the first signs of veraison in early August. Fortunately our reliable marine winds kept night-time temperatures cool, preserving acidity in the fruit as it ripened, and welcome rain events in September carried the vines through the final ripening period. The very dry hot summer made for small clusters with very small berries that in many ways defined our 2018 wines. The wines are significantly darker than is typical at Bethel Heights, with increased potential for tannin.

“The dark brooding nature of the vintage is unmistakable. Not since 2008 have we seen wines with the early exuberance of fruit that one expects from a warm vintage, combined with such a lean muscular structure of tannin and acid promising significant ageability.” Ben Casteel

95 JAMESSUCKLING.COM

This has a very complex nose with violets and a wealth of fragrant, woody spices and sous bois, as well as red and dark cherries. The palate has a very juicy feel with vertical dimension, creating levity and a vibrant feel. Succulent, lively and delicious pinot noir with a smooth, fresh, pastry-like texture at the finish.



2018 PINOT NOIR • FLAT BLOCK

LIVE Certified

Harvest date: September 28, 2018

Grapes at harvest: Brix: 24, pH: 3.28, TA: 8.2 g/L

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.5%, pH: 3.6, TA: 6.0 g/L

Barrel aged 9 months in French oak

45% new barrels

200 cases produced

Bottled unfined July 26, 2019

VINIFICATION: The Flat Block fruit was completely destemmed into one 3-ton stainless steel fermentation tank and one 1.25-ton bin and cold soaked for 3 days prior to the onset of fermentation. To maintain aromatic intensity and complexity we elected to keep our fermentations relatively cool (peak of 80 F) and extraction minimal to preserve freshness and vibrancy. The new wine was pressed at dryness and settled prior to racking to barrel.

WINEMAKER NOTES: Since its first separate bottling in 1991, the Flat Block has always been the standard of grace and purity at Bethel Heights, two words I would not use to describe the 2018 vintage. We were fortunate with warm weather and a manageable crop during harvest, with concentration essentially built into the vintage with small clusters and berries. The resulting 2018 Flat Block is darker pitched than previous vintages, with more structure and depth than any vintage I can recall stretching back to 2008.

www.bethelheights.com