

THE CASTEEL PINOT NOIR

The Casteel Pinot Noir is a blend of the best barrels from our vineyard, 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 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 VINOUS

Glistening ruby-red. Expansive aromas of ripe red and blue fruits, candied flowers, vanilla and baking spices; a smoky mineral flourish gains strength as the wine opens up. Coats the palate with appealing sweet boysenberry and cherry liqueur flavors that tighten up and become spicier on the back half. Shows fine clarity and floral lift on a long, velvety finish shaped by fine-grained, even tannins.



2018 PINOT NOIR CASTEEL

Harvest date: October 3, 2018

Fruit source: Bethel Heights West 114, 115 and 777

Grapes at harvest: Brix 23.2, pH 3.08, TA 8.7 gr/liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.8%, pH 3.46, TA 5.8 gr/liter

Barrel aged 14 months in French oak, 40% new barrels

300 cases produced

Bottled unfiltered February 11, 2020

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 fermentations reached peak temperature, the new wine was aerated once a day, and pressed at dryness. The wine was racked to barrels and aged 14 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 2010 vintage, focused on two blocks planted in 1994 and 1996 on the most beautiful slope on the west side of the vineyard, but this hasn't stopped us from trying new things as the years go by. One particular block of own-rooted Chardonnay vines, top-worked over to Pinot noir in 2001, that never struck me as anything special (perhaps because of being labeled 'the shed block' due to, well ... its proximity to the equipment shed), has in recent years become one of the very best things we have. Excluding this block from the best wine we make has felt increasingly like a crime, so here it is, in equal parts with its sibling blocks that have defined the Casteel for a decade.