

### BETHEL HEIGHTS SOUTHEAST BLOCK

The Southeast Block is a six-acre section of own-rooted Pommard clone vines planted in 1979 on a south-facing slope between 420 and 520 feet elevation. The red clay soil is volcanic in origin, three feet deep and well drained.

The Southeast Block sits just below the Flat Block, but despite their proximity in both age and location, the Southeast Block expresses the darker and more savory side of Bethel Heights, showcasing more structure and sinewy muscle under a dense core of black fruits.

### THE 2019 VINTAGE

In contrast to the previous five vintages which were all dry and quite warm, 2019 started with cool, moist weather in the Spring that persisted into early summer. Even after it warmed up somewhat in mid-summer, we had unusually high levels of humidity, and this continued into a cool, damp Fall. Maturation was delayed and disease pressure, amplified by the humid conditions, challenged growers every step of the way.

In spite of these challenges, 2019 had a happy ending. The crop was small, with small berries and lots of intensity. The cool season also allowed us to outperform on hang time. Instead of the normal 100 days, we were able to leave the fruit on the vines for 110 to 120 days without excess sugar accumulation, giving us enhanced depth and complexity.

“2019 allowed us to slip back into the past, into cooler vintages when Oregon wine balanced on the margins of viticulture, striving to get grapes as ripe as we were able to get them as opposed to as ripe as we wanted to get them. If we think about vintages being defined by the sun versus vintages defined by the soil, 2019 was a welcome return to the soil.” Ben Casteel



### 2019 PINOT NOIR • SOUTHEAST BLOCK

#### *LIVE Certified*

Harvest date: September 27, 2019

Grapes at harvest: Brix 22.5, pH 3.1, TA 7.1 g/L

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.1%, pH 3.35, TA 5.8 g/L

Barrel aged 11 months in French oak

40% new barrels

121 cases produced

Bottled unfined August 2020

**VINIFICATION:** The fruit was completely destemmed into a three-ton stainless steel tank and cold soaked for three days prior to onset of fermentation. To maintain aromatic intensity and, in the case of the Southeast Block, to minimize the potential for excessive tannin, we kept 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:** The Southeast Block continues to be the mercurial wine in our portfolio despite the vines turning 42 shortly after the 2019 harvest. The blue fruits of the mid-nineties and early aughts have given way to forest floor, camphor, and black fruits, but the structure of the Southeast Block has remained constant over the years. Even in the cool growing season of 2019 and with relatively little intervention during vinification, the power and depth on the palate speaks to the place rather than the conditions of the vintage or cellar, one of the many things that make this block special.