

Certified Sustainably Grown

Harvest dates: Sept. 29, Oct. 6, & Oct. 8, 2007

Grapes at harvest:

Brix: 23 – 24.2, pH: 3.22, TA: 6.0 – 7.0 gr/liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.2 %, pH: 3.54, TA: 5.5 gr/liter

Barrel aged 12 months in French oak, 58% new barrels

864 cases bottled October 7, 2008

Suggested Retail \$60

THE CASTEEL RESERVE PINOT NOIR is a blend of barrels from different lots, selected by the winemaker to represent the best of the vintage. The blend is different from vintage to vintage. In 2007 the backbone structure of the wine comes from the South Block at Bethel Heights, planted in 1979 to the Pommard clone. The ripe berry fruit components come from younger Dijon clone vines at Justice Vineyard (clones 667 and 114), planted in 1999 on early ripening rootstocks.

VINIFICATION:

All the fruit was destemmed without crushing. After a five-day cold soak some lots were fermented with our favorite cultured yeasts and the rest fermented spontaneously. The wines were racked once before blending and bottling in December 2008.

THE 2007 VINTAGE AT BETHEL HEIGHTS

2007 was a classic, cool Oregon vintage, similar to 2005 (and 1999 and 2001) and very different from 2006 – our hottest vintage on record. In 2007, the summer provided adequate heat to ripen the fruit, and the fall finished cool, allowing the grapes to fully express their varietal character without losing acidity and without accumulating excessive amounts of sugar, as Pinot noir tends to do in hot vintages.

However, periods of rain at the end of the season meant that 2007 was a year when it definitely helped to have well drained soils and mature vines. Our thirty-year-old vines have deep reserves to draw on when skies turn grey, so they can go the extra distance at the end of the season, bringing their fruit to maturity rather than stopping short at green flavors.

In the vineyard, 2007 was tricky. Nice weather at bloom produced a large crop that had to be severely thinned to achieve optimum ripening. Our crew thinned the crop three times before it was over. The final thinning took off wings and shoulders from the clusters, one of the details that makes a difference in a cool vintage. When the fall turned rainy and cool, the crew went through the vineyard one more time to pull more leaves around the fruit, as a hedge against botrytis, and to get more sun on the fruit.

The decision when to pick is the most critical decision of every vintage. You are not just waiting for the Brix to reach some magic number, you're really waiting for the final stage of flavor development, which is more a matter of hang time than anything else - it can happen at 20 Brix or it can happen at 25 Brix. The only way to know you have it is to taste it, and you have to have the courage to trust your palate and wait for the flavors, even when the first big fall rainstorm is looming on the horizon.

In the end, 2007 gave us wines with moderate alcohol, bright acidity, and pure fruit character. As our winemaker said, "2007 needed very little intervention in the winery. The work was all done in the vineyard."

Reviews

92 WINE ADVOCATE

"My favorite of the collection, it is the most deeply colored as well as the most fragrant. Asian spices, incense, black cherry, and black raspberry aromas lead to a layered wine with tons of succulent fruit, 2-3 years of aging potential, and a long, pure finish. It will offer pleasure through 2022."

92 STEPHEN TANZER'S INTERNATIONAL WINE CELLAR

"Pungent, deeply pitched aromas of blackberry, cherrycola, star anise and mocha, with a subtle floral quality that gains strength with air. Juicy, penetrating cherry and dark berry preserve flavors are framed by supple tannins that gain strength on the back half. At once rich and lively, with impressive finishing breadth, precision and spicy persistence. Shows very good depth for the vintage, as well as the briskness of the year, and should reward several years of bottle aging."