

SHADES OF GRIS

Katherine Cole
The Oregonian

Pinot gris is a genetic mutation of pinot noir, making it something like a fraternal twin to the ruby-hued darling of Oregon winemaking. So it's well suited to the growing conditions of the Willamette Valley.

But instead of Burgundy (French pinot noir country), the epicenter of pinot gris in France is Alsace, the cool northeastern region where volcanic soils and dry, sunny autumns create powerfully spicy, viscous, sometimes slightly sweet gris. These rich wines pair well with hearty local fare such as pork and potatoes.

The cool and mountainous wine regions of northern Italy produce boatloads of crisp, dry, lemony pinot grigio, perfect for washing down delicate seafood dishes and herbaceous pesto. (As you've surely deduced by now, "grigio" and "gris" mean the same thing: gray. This refers to the grayish tint of the ripe grape skins.)

For us, locally grown gris should conjure the aromas and flavors of those sun-kissed fruits that reach their peak in late summer and early autumn. Instead of descriptors like "nuts," "smoke" and "candy," we find ourselves referring to pears, peaches, white flowers and a cornucopia of melons and citrus. The wines we prefer strike a balance between the lightness of an Italian pinot grigio and the richness of an Alsatian pinot gris.

Oregon Certified Sustainable Wine



The OCSW logo on the back label of our 2012 Pinot Gris guarantees that both the agricultural and winemaking practices were certified sustainable by an independent third-party.

BETHEL HEIGHTS VINEYARD

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2012 PINOT GRIS

Certified Sustainably Grown

Harvest date: September 26 – October 16, 2012

Fruit source: Bethel Heights Vineyard 39%,

Buttonfield Vineyard 13%,

Lewman Vineyard 13% , Illahe Vineyards 9%,

Pheasant Hill Vineyard (Rogue Valley) 26%

Grapes at harvest (average): Brix 22.8, pH 3.23, TA 7.2

Finished wine: Alcohol 14.02%, pH 3.3, TA 6.9

No residual sugar

1045 cases produced, bottled February 21, 2013

Suggested retail \$16

THE 2012 VINTAGE provided us with a welcome contrast to 2010 and 2011, when we were firmly in the grip of the unusually cool climatic conditions of an extended La Niña. Although 2012 began slowly, with a late budbreak and a cool Spring, by late June the momentum shifted. Bloom was well underway in the final week of June, and we were tracking ten days ahead of 2011. But the real story of the vintage was the weather for the rest of the season: endless sunny days with warm temperatures and perfect ripening conditions. Many sites saw dry weather for 100-110 straight days. Harvest began almost three weeks earlier than in 2011, with fruit at optimum ripeness.

VINIFICATION: The fruit was whole cluster pressed at low pressure for 3-4 hours, and the juice was transferred to a settling tank for 72 hours. Once sufficient clarity was obtained, the juice was racked to stainless steel tanks and fermented at 55° F for one month. Given the ripe nature of the vintage, we decided to let the wine ferment to dryness.

TASTING NOTES: Aromas of lychee, key lime, and banana, giving way to underlying aromas of flint and honeydew melon. The palate is round and generous, showcasing the plush nature of the vintage while still maintaining a bright core of acidity for balance.