

## *Notes on blending the Casteel Pinot Noir*

Over the past twenty years Bethel Heights has been known for crafting limited bottlings of distinctive vineyard and block designated Pinot noir wines. In 2002 we took a new path and produced our first Casteel Reserve Pinot Noir, a blend of barrels from several different blocks, selected to express the epitome of that particular vintage. This is the only Bethel Heights 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.

Each block in our estate vineyard has its own character. Each vintage as we taste through the vineyard we begin to forecast long before harvest which blocks are going to compose this wine: the blocks that will lend structure for aging and the core of fruits and earth that give the wine a soul.

In 2014 we selected 17 barrels, from two different blocks at Bethel Heights:

Selection 114 (planted 1996) provides the skeleton and central nervous system: this firm structure we see here defines the architecture of our final creation.

Selection 115 (planted 1994) provides the flesh: generous fruit blessed by a gentle warm air current that flows north/south through this block.

This extraordinary vintage begged for barrel time. We waited fourteen months to bottle. Then we blended together just enough of each to reach a balance, and moved the wine into bottle, out of our lives and into yours.

**THE 2014 VINTAGE** was our warmest vintage on record at Bethel Heights, presenting the possibility of over-wrought wines marked by the character of the growing season, and not of the place they are grown. We made a bold, potentially risky decision to leave a larger than usual crop on the vines to slow everything down, and it paid off with beautiful, balanced wines. 2014 was a year when great wine could only be made in the vineyard.

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### **2014 PINOT NOIR CASTEEL**

Harvest date: October 7th, 2014

Grapes at harvest: Brix 24, pH 3.26, TA 5.8 gr/liter  
Finished wine: Alcohol 13.5%, pH 3.5, TA 5.3 gr/liter

Barrel aged 14 months in French oak, 35% new barrels

400 cases produced (800 six-packs)

Bottled unfinned on January 19th, 2016

**VINIFICATION:** All the fruit was destemmed without crushing. After a 3-day cold soak, the fermenters warmed naturally and were gently punched down twice a day at the onset of fermentation. After peak fermentation, the new wine was aerated once a day, and pressed at dryness. After settling for one week, the new wine was racked to barrels, and bottled after 14 months in barrel.

**WINEMAKER NOTES:** Aromas of black cherry, pine resin, and black currants with hints of cooking chocolate and cinnamon; flavors of black berries and dark chocolate play over a sinewy, taut structure of mineral-laden acidity and fine-grained tannins. In a vintage that threatened to be over-wrought and soft, we were very pleased that the core of our Estate maintained the energy and focus we have come to expect, to support and carry the fruit long into the future.

#### **94 THE WINE ADVOCATE – Neal Martin**

The 2014 Pinot Noir Casteel Reserve is more of a location-orientated cuvée since 2008, coming from two parcels within the Bethel Heights vineyard. It has a crisp and very focused bouquet with dark plum, cranberry leaf and cold stone aromas that show impressive transparency. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannin, very harmonious and cohesive with a supple texture, very pure with great tension and precision towards the finish. What a fabulous Pinot Noir - world class... one of the finest I tasted throughout my time in Oregon.