

Notes from the Winemaker *On blending the Casteel Reserve*

Over the past twenty years Bethel Heights has been known for limited bottlings of distinctive vineyard designated and block designated Pinot noir wines. In 2002 we took a new path and produced our first Casteel Reserve Pinot noir, blending select barrels from several different vineyard sites. It turned out to be a very exciting wine.

When we set out to select our best barrels and blend our 2003 Casteel Reserve we did not necessarily expect to end up with the same components as we had in 2002, but in fact that was what happened. The same three lots are here, in almost the same proportions: Bethel Heights Flat Block, Bethel Heights Wädenswil Block, and Seven Springs Vineyard. The Wädenswil gives the bright, sappy fruit; the Flat Block and Seven Springs add complexity and breadth of interest.

Bethel Heights Wädenswil Block was planted in 1977, the only section of our vineyard planted to the distinctive Wädenswil clone of Pinot noir. The vines are very large and very fruitful, requiring extensive thinning to give us ripe fruit with good concentration. Every year it is one of the last lots to be harvested. Its wines consistently have bright acidity and well-defined fresh fruit character, particularly black cherry.

Bethel Heights Flat Block was planted in 1979 to the Pommard clone of Pinot noir. The soils here are shallower and somewhat lighter than the rest of the vineyard, and the slope is gradual – actually rather flat. Complexity and elegance are the hallmarks of the Flat Block.

Seven Springs Vineyard is about five miles north of Bethel Heights, established in 1982. Undoubtedly one of the best vineyard sites in the Willamette Valley, Seven Springs produces wines with a distinctive mix of red and black fruit with a touch of savory spice.

The 2003 Casteel Reserve Pinot Noir has all the elegance and complexity of the 2002. While remaining true to its parent lots, the wine integrates the component parts into its own delicious statement.

Terry Casteel, Winemaker

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2003 PINOT NOIR ♦ CASTEEL RESERVE

Certified Sustainably Grown

Fruit source:

22% Bethel Heights Wädenswil Block

39% Bethel Heights Flat Block

39% Seven Springs Vineyard

Harvest date: October 1 - 6, 2003

Grapes at harvest: Brix: 23.8 - 24.6, pH: 3.3, TA: 6.0 - 7.5 gr/liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 14.5 %, pH: 3.71, TA: 5.6 gr/liter

Barrel aged 15 months in French oak, 60% new barrels

Bottled unfiltered January, 2005

500 Cases Produced

Suggested Retail \$ 40

The 2003 vintage: The growing season in 2003 was so long that we enjoyed the luxury of harvesting all the fruit when it was perfectly ripe. The Spring was quite rainy so we began the season with a full charge of water in the soil. Summer warmed up dramatically, with many days over 90°, but cool evening temperatures preserved acidity and balance in the wines.

Vinification: About 15% of the fruit was fermented whole-cluster and the rest was destemmed without crushing. Most was fermented in one-ton open bins. The wine was racked once, and bottled unfiltered.

Tasting Notes: Lush aromatic profile featuring black cherry, raspberry, clove spice, and well integrated wood. Complex flavor profile includes black cherry, raspberry and current with stonefruit, mineral and leather. Excellent balance and weight. Elegant.