

## *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 2004 Casteel Reserve we did not predetermine what components would be included, but as in 2002 and 2003, the blend includes Bethel Heights Flat Block, Bethel Heights Wädenswil Block, and Seven Springs Vineyard. A new element in 2004 is the Bethel Heights Clone 114, which lifts the fruit profile and broadens the middle palate.

**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. 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, almost flat. Complexity and elegance are the hallmarks of the Flat Block.

**Bethel Heights Clone 114**, planted in 1996, is our current favorite of the Burgundian clones that became available in Oregon in the early 1990s. It adds youthful upfront fruit to the blend and contributes to mid-palate sweetness.

**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 2004 Casteel Reserve has all the elegance and complexity of its predecessors. Although purists may remain committed to the separate block and vineyard designated bottlings, for others this reserve blend has emerged as the best of Bethel Heights Pinot Noir.

***Terry Casteel, Winemaker***

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2004 PINOT NOIR • CASTEEL RESERVE

*Certified Sustainably Grown*

Fruit sources:

20% Bethel Heights Wädenswil Block,  
25% Bethel Heights Flat Block, 25% Bethel Heights Clone 114  
30% Seven Springs Vineyard

Harvest dates: September 28 - October 5, 2004

Grapes at harvest: Brix: 24, pH: 3.28 TA: 6.8 gr/liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.8 %, pH: 3.75, TA: 5.5 gr/liter

Barrel aged 14 months in French oak, 40% new barrels

687 Cases produced, bottled February, 2006

Suggested Retail \$ 45

***The 2004 Vintage:*** A warmer than normal late winter and early spring got the year off to a fast start. Bloom was underway in early June. A hot mid season, combined with the early start, raised concerns about a hot vintage, but cool evening temperatures preserved acidity and balance in the wines.

Occasional fall storms created conditions for both great wines and disease pressure. Happily we dodged the worst of the late August storm. A warm September with normal precipitation led to a classic Oregon vintage with intense varietal expression and considerable wine intensity. (Similar to '83, '88, '89, '90.)

***Vinification:*** Between 15% and 25% of the fruit was fermented whole-cluster. The remaining portion 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, blended and bottled in February, 2006.

“Smoky, musky blackberry aroma is lifted by spicy and floral nuances. Sweet and silky on the palate, conveying an explosive impression of ripe blackberry and cassis. One of the most powerfully fruit-driven wines I tasted from Oregon this year. The juicy, long finish features a concentrated blackcurrant flavor and a complicating smoky quality. Really sexy pinot.”

92 *Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar*