

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 2005 Casteel Reserve we did not predetermine what components would be included but, as in each previous vintage, the 2005 blend includes Bethel Heights Flat Block, Bethel Heights Wädenswil Block, and Seven Springs Vineyard. The final element 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 2005 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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2005 PINOT NOIR ♦ CASTEEL RESERVE

Certified Sustainably Grown

Fruit sources:

32% Bethel Heights Flat Block

36% Seven Springs Vineyard

16% Bethel Heights Wädenswil Block

16% Bethel Heights Clone 114

Harvest dates: September 28 - October 5, 2005

Grapes at harvest: Brix: 23.5, pH: 3.28, TA: 6.8 gr/liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.5 %, pH: 3.54, TA: 5.8 gr/liter

Barrel aged 14 months in French oak, 50% new barrels

558 Cases produced, bottled February, 2007

Suggested Retail \$ 50

The 2005 Vintage: 2005 was the coolest vintage that we have had in Oregon in quite a while. It got off to a very early start, but the weather turned cool and rainy in late spring and early summer, leading to a reduced crop due to poor set. An intensely warm mid-summer followed. An equal mix of bright, sunny days and cool, showery periods characterized the fall.

2005 was a classic example of rains providing balance to the fruit after a warm, dry summer; it gave us wines of moderate alcohol, medium body, supple structure, good typicity of variety and place, and very good balance.

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.

Tasting Notes: Aromatic profile is dominated by black cherry, raspberry, currant, and oak spice. The palate is broad, featuring dense red fruit and a subtle earthiness, yet also framed by vibrant acids which not only provide the wine with length, but also provide the necessary structure for aging.