

Notes from the Winemaker *On blending the Casteel Reserve*

The Casteel Reserve Pinot Noir is a blend of select barrels from several blocks in our Estate vineyards, selected to represent the best expression of the vintage. The blend is different from vintage to vintage. This is the only Bethel Heights Pinot noir that carries our family name rather than a place name, which gives the winemaker considerable poetic license.

In recent years the chosen barrels have been coming more and more often from some of our second generation Pinot noir blocks, now reaching fifteen years old and definitely beginning to rival our Legacy Blocks in character and quality. It seems our second generation vines and our second generation winemaking team are reaching maturity together.

In the 2010 Casteel Reserve our clone 114 planted in 1996 makes up 50% of the blend, and 20% comes from a block of clone 667 at Justice Vineyard planted in 1999. 30% comes from our oldest vines, Wädenswil clone planted in 1977.

THE 2010 VINTAGE: The 2010 growing season started very slowly, with cool, damp weather that delayed bloom until early July. Weather continued cool through the summer and September was cool and showery. But then the skies cleared and a perfect Indian Summer carried the fruit to ideal maturity late in October.

92 WINE ADVOCATE

“Combining fruit from several sweet spots on their property (and reflecting two Dijon clones and a bit of Wädenswil), the Bethel Heights 2010 Pinot Noir Casteel Reserve displays a delightfully juicy and flower-bedecked amalgam of red and black currant, elderberry and cherry, as well as a polished feel and saliva-inducing undertone of nut oils and salted, fatty roasting pan scrapings that send my salivary glands into palpitations. And there’s a real ping of energy in this wine’s dynamic and sustained finish. This ought to be worth following for a decade.”

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2010 PINOT NOIR • CASTEEL RESERVE

Certified Sustainably Grown

Harvest dates: October 18-20, 2010

Grapes at harvest: Brix 22.5-23, pH 3.18-3.2,

TA 6.8-8.3 gr/liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 12.8%, pH 3.45, TA 7.5 gr/liter

Barrel aged 11 months in French oak, 60% new barrels

270 cases produced.

Bottled September 21, 2011

VINIFICATION: All the fruit was destemmed without crushing. After a five to 8 day cold soak, the fermenters warmed naturally and were inoculated with our favorite cultured yeast. The wines were racked once before blending and bottling in September 2011.

WINEMAKER NOTES: The wine opens with aromas of blueberries, yellow plums, hints of oak spice, and a blackberry sorbet. The palate lush and full, with black cherries and blueberries over lively acidity and a robust backbone of tannin.

AGEABILITY: The 2010 vintage is what everyone should hold in their mind when discussing “cool climate, ageworthy Pinot Noir.” These wines are defined by intense concentration, low alcohol, and vibrant acidity, all of which are hallmarks of ageworthy wines. I think ten years is a reasonable floor for these wines. The ceiling could be unprecedented for Oregon. *Ben Casteel*

94 WINE SPECTATOR

“Smooth, round and expressive, light-footed but bursting with currant, blackberry and floral flavors, hinting at mint and wet stone as the finish lingers effortlessly against fine-grained tannins. Drink now through 2020.”