

Notes from the Winemaker
On introducing a new wine

At Bethel Heights over the past twenty years our focus has been to celebrate the differences. If a Pinot noir grown on a particular corner of the vineyard was distinctive and complete, our inclination has been to bottle it separately. In recent vintages we have made as many as six different vineyard designated or block designated reserve wines, each one with its own character and its own fans, but very limited availability.

For our friends around the country it has become very difficult to keep up with all the distinctions among our Pinot noirs. In the past couple of years we have been urged to think about blending some of our best lots into one reserve level Pinot noir that would be as good as all the others, but would be consistently available around the country. In 2002 we accepted the challenge.

Putting this wine together was both enjoyable and nostalgic. It was nostalgic because we were watching parts of lots that we knew were terrific stand-alone wines disappear into a new wine that we hoped would have its own character and exceptional quality. It was enjoyable because a new wine emerged that we like very much. You will no doubt notice that our traditional preference for elegance over power is maintained in this wine. I'm glad we had a great vintage like 2002 in which to introduce it.

In naming our wines we have usually behaved more like geographers than marketers with names like "Southeast," "Flat," and "West" Blocks. This one had no such easy solution and many possibilities were rejected until we finally decided on a family name, "Casteel Reserve," which we are beginning to like almost as much as we like the wine. We hope you do too.

Terry Casteel, Winemaker

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2002 PINOT NOIR ♦ CASTEEL RESERVE

Certified Sustainably Grown

Source:

36% Bethel Heights Wädenswil Block

32% Bethel Heights Flat Block

32% Seven Springs Vineyard

Harvest date: October 16- 20, 2002

Grapes at harvest:

Brix: 25 - 25.5, pH: 3.21 - 3.42, TA: 7.0 - 8.5 gr/liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 14.1 %, pH: 3.71, TA: 5.7 gr/liter

Barrel aged 15 months in 60% new French oak

Bottled unfiltered in February, 2004

500 Cases Produced

Suggested Retail \$ 40

The 2002 vintage: Bloom in mid-June under sunny skies set a large crop that had to be thinned aggressively. Sunny and unusually dry weather persisted through the summer, bringing good flavor and sugar development with no disease pressure. With no threat of rain during the harvest period we were able to pick all lots at perfect ripeness.

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.

(93) The Wine Advocate "The 2002 Pinot Noir Casteel Reserve is a superb debut for this new label. Its sublime aromatics burst with flowers, spices, and copious quantities of dark fruits. Expansive, ample, and wonderfully harmonious, its concentrated, deep character offers loads of highly expressive violet, rose, cherry, blackberry, and blueberry flavors. Having tasted Bethel Heights's wines from each individual vineyard included in this blend, there is no doubt in my mind that the sum is greater than the individual parts."