

The Eola-Amity Hills

Bethel Heights Vineyard is located in the Eola-Amity Hills, an independent hill chain in the center of the Willamette Valley, home to many highly regarded vineyards. In July 2006, our hill-chain was granted a federally approved viticultural appellation of origin, recognizing a place name that is historically and geographically distinct.

We have discovered over the past three decades that Pinot noir more than any other grape is a creature of place, and while there are clear differences even between adjacent blocks within our own vineyard, we are now beginning to recognize broad similarities that distinguish wines grown in the Eola-Amity Hills from wines grown in other parts of the Willamette Valley.

We do know the geography is unique. This freestanding hill chain stretches about sixteen miles from just south of McMinnville to the Willamette River in West Salem. The soils are typically volcanic in most areas, and significantly shallower than in the Red Hills and Chehalem Mountain.

Another defining characteristic is the Van Duzer effect, created by a low point in the Coast Range directly to the West. That unique break in the mountains funnels cool air from the Pacific into the valley and lines up directly with the Eola-Amity Hills. The late afternoon cooling breeze and relatively cool nights help the grapes retain freshness and acidity, allowing us to leave our fruit on the vines longer into the fall than vineyards in the north end of the Willamette Valley.

Our 2005 Eola-Amity Hills Cuvée celebrates our new appellation.

It blends fruit from Lewman Vineyard, adjacent to Bethel Heights on the South, Elton Vineyards, a large vineyard about six miles to the north, and Belle Provenance Vineyard, a nearby neighbor just to the southeast.

BETHEL HEIGHTS VINEYARD

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2005 PINOT NOIR • EOLA-AMITY HILLS CUVÉE

Harvest dates: Sept. 30, Oct. 10, and Oct. 23, 2005

Source: 56% Elton Vineyard, 33% Belle Provenance Vineyard,
11% Lewman Vineyard

Grapes at harvest (average): Brix : 23.7; pH: 3.45

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.3 %, pH: 3.71, TA: 4.0 gr/liter

711 Cases produced, bottled September, 2006

Suggested retail \$25

WINEMAKER NOTES: The fruit was destemmed into 1.5 ton fermentation bins, then chilled and kept cold for five days before fermentation began. Following ten to fourteen-day fermentations, the new wine went into French oak barrels (20% new) for ten months. Each lot was kept separate until the final blending of the cuvée.

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 (March budbreak), 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. The fall was characterized by an equal mix of bright, sunny days and cool, showery periods.

Although most Oregon growers would prefer no rain at all from *veraison* until harvest, in Burgundy they say a good rainstorm in early September is a basic ingredient of a great vintage, and we have seen in recent vintages that excessive heat in the fall can be more detrimental to wine quality than rain. 2005 was a classic example of fall rains providing balance to the fruit after a warm, dry summer; it gave us wines of moderate alcohol, medium body, supple structure, and good typicity, both of variety and place, and very good balance.

TASTING NOTES: This wine is very forward and fruity, less structured than our estate wines, but with a core of fruit that is bright and lively on the palate. Aromas of smoky black cherry and raspberry are complimented by currant and baking spice. Supple and silky texture is defined by raspberries and cassis. Subtle oak spice with elegant tannins round out the palate.