

ILLAHE VINEYARD

“Illahe” is a local word from Chinook jargon meaning “earth” or “place” or “soil.”

Illahe Vineyard is located in the mid-Willamette Valley, in the hills east of the town of Dallas. Established in 2001, the 52-acre vineyard includes 44 acres of pinot noir. It is a warm site with shallow clay soils that experiences slightly earlier budbreak and flowering than many other vineyards in the Willamette Valley.

Illahe’s owner-grower, Lowell Ford, is recognized for his careful viticulture and commitment to sustainability, so we were not surprised when Illahe Pinot noir became an outstanding component in our Willamette Valley blend in 2010. In 2011 we liked some of the Illahe fruit too much to lose it in the blend, so we made this small amount of Illahe Vineyard designated Pinot noir to share with our Cellar Club.

THE 2011 VINTAGE was the latest vintage on record in the Willamette Valley. All of the principal phenological benchmarks were much later than normal: budbreak delayed until early May, bloom at only 50% on the 9th of July, *veraison* just beginning in early September. Except for one hot spell in early September, temperatures rarely found their way into the ‘90s, and harvest did not begin until the 24th of October. But in the end, the long, relatively dry fall and very extended hang time led to wines of great concentration and intensity with moderate alcohol.

BETHEL HEIGHTS VINEYARD

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2011 PINOT NOIR

ILLAHE VINEYARDS

Certified Sustainably Grown

Harvest date: November 1, 2011

Grapes at harvest: Brix 21.6, pH 3.28, TA 7.8 g/liter
Finished wine: Alcohol 12.9 %, pH 3.47 TA 6.2 g/liter
Barrel aged 11 months in French oak, 33% new barrels

67 cases produced

Bottled September 28, 2012

VINIFICATION: The de-stemmed fruit was held for 7 days in cold maceration prior to fermentation, then fermented for 8 days. The must was punched down twice per day at the onset of fermentation until it reached a peak temperature of 90 degrees. For the remainder of fermentation the wine was gently aerated, and then settled for 7 days before going into barrels.

WINEMAKER NOTES: Aromas of brandied cherry, hazelnuts, and oak spice over subtle notes of black tea, star anise, and black currant. Flavors of rhubarb and raspberry over hints of cinnamon develop over a balanced acidity and mouth coating, fine grain tannin. *Ben Casteel*

91 WINE ADVOCATE

“Deep ferrous and beef blood low-tones here could almost be mistaken for those of a Syrah, but the vivacity and levity as well as the exuberantly juicy brightness of tart dark plum and blackberry are all-Pinot, as is the sense of melting-away tannins. Earthy, stony and otherwise “mineral” nuances abound. And speaking of Syrah-like traits, there is a bite of black pepper adding to the invigoration of this Pinot’s vibrant finish. It ought to merit following through at least 2020.”