

The Southeast Block is a six-acre section of Bethel Heights estate vineyard that regularly gives us wines of distinctive character deserving special designation. Wines from the Southeast Block have been bottled as separate reserves since 1991.

The Southeast Block was planted in 1979 on a south-facing slope that inclines about twenty degrees between 420 and 520 feet altitude. The red clay soil is volcanic in origin, about three feet deep and well drained. The vines are 100% Pommard clone. Planted on their own roots in Oregon's pre-phylloxera days, at twenty-five years old they are still healthy and apparently phylloxera-free. The vines are trained to a Scott Henry trellis system and the crop is held close to two tons per acre.

Vintage 2002

The 2002 growing season proved to be one of the longest and warmest in the last decade, continuing the unprecedented streak of fine vintages Oregon has enjoyed since 1998. We anticipated beginning harvest in Mid-September but with good weather in the forecast we had the luxury to wait for optimal ripeness in each of our blocks. The resulting wines are among the most generous we've seen since the warm vintages of '90, '92 and '94 with very ripe flavors, rich textures and considerable structure. The wines, however, manage to carry their weight and alcohol with surprising grace. Given their current lushness these are wines to be enjoyed over the next few years, although those with good acidity will cellar well for the long term.

"This is the state's best vintage yet, the pinnacle of a string of warm, dry vintages. The best 2002s have superb balance and pure, ripe flavors. . . The steady, warm weather in 2002 produced balanced, supple wines."

Harvey Steiman
The Wine Spectator, June 30, 2004

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2002 PINOT NOIR ♦ SOUTHEAST BLOCK RESERVE

Harvest date: October 15, 2002

Grapes at harvest: Brix : 24.0, pH: 3.32, TA: 6.8 gr/liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 14.0 %, pH: 3.75, TA: 6.0 gr/liter

Barrel aged 14 months in Center of France oak, 45% new

Bottled unfiltered January 29, 2004

205 Cases produced

Suggested Retail \$38

Vinification: The Southeast Block was picked in two passes, first on October 8th and then on October 15th, as an experiment to consider the impact of extended hang time for the fruit. Both lots were fermented in 5 ton temperature controlled stainless steel fermenters. 15% of each lot was vinified as whole clusters, the remainder of the fruit being gently destemmed. After a cold soak of 5 days both lots were inoculated with the same yeast. After completion of primary fermentation the lots were pressed, the wine settled overnight and then racked to French barrels. The lots remained separate throughout their lives in the cellar. In the spring, after the completion of malolactic fermentation the wines were compared both in tastings and in the lab. Nine of the best barrels were selected and blended for the reserve wine: 45% new oak, all from the October 15th lot. The remaining barrels were incorporated into our Estate Pinot Noir.

Tasting Notes: Damp earth and vibrant forest tones vie with blueberry, peach preserve and white plum aromas on the nose of this complex wine. On the palate it displays an almost resinous intensity of fruit with layers of choke cherry, red gooseberry and blackberry swirling among copious but polished tannins. The wine displays an exceptionally long finish with notes of anise, sage, and cassis floating over a base of black cherry. While tempting now for its power and concentration, the wine will integrate more completely with a bit of bottle age and promises to drink well for many years.

Certified Sustainably Grown: The 2002 Southeast Block Reserve Pinot Noir is certified sustainably grown under international standards by LIVE Inc. For details go to www.liveinc.org. It is also certified Salmon Safe™ signifying farming practices that restore and protect healthy streams and rivers. For details, go to www.salmonsafe.org.