

Pinot Noir at Bethel Heights

Thirty-seven of the forty-nine acres of our original estate vineyard are planted to Pinot noir, in seven different sections. Over the years certain blocks have given us wines of distinctive character deserving special designation, most consistently the Southeast Block and the Flat Block.

The Southeast Block is a six-acre section of Bethel Heights' estate vineyard 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-six years old the vines are still healthy and apparently phylloxera-free. The vines are trained to a Scott Henry trellis and the crop is held close to two tons per acre.

The 2003 vintage was one of our warmest vintages in twenty years, reminiscent of 1992. Fortunately the Spring was quite rainy so we began the season with a full charge of water in the soil. Summer saw many days over 90°, but our reliable maritime breezes kept the nights cool, preserving acidity and balance in the wines. Having learned in 1987 the folly of picking too early in a hot vintage, we let the sugars go where nature took them and picked the fruit when it was perfectly ripe.

Certified Sustainably Grown:

Bethel Heights' estate grown wines are certified sustainably grown by LIVE Inc. and Salmon Safe™. **LIVE** (Low Input Viticulture and Enology) is accredited under international standards of Integrated Production. **Salmon Safe™** certifies farming practices that restore and protect healthy streams and rivers. For details, go to www.liveinc.org and www.salmonsafe.org.

Winemaker: Terry Casteel
Vineyard Manager: Ted Casteel

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2003 PINOT NOIR ♦ SOUTHEAST BLOCK RESERVE

Certified Sustainably Grown

Harvest date: October 12, 2003

Grapes at harvest: Brix : 23.7 – 24.9, pH: 3.24, TA: 6.8 gr/liter

Finished wine: Alcohol 14.89 %, pH: 3.69, TA: 5.5 gr/liter

Barrel aged 12 months in French oak, 60% new

Bottled unfiltered January, 2005

208 Cases produced

Suggested Retail \$38

Making the wine: In 2003 the Southeast Block was thinned to two different crop levels as an experiment to consider the effect of thinning levels on wine quality. Half the block was thinned to one cluster per shoot, the other half to one cluster every other shoot. The final reserve selection was predominantly taken from the lot thinned to one cluster per shoot, which was found to be less tannic and better balanced.

The wine was fermented in 5 ton open-topped fermenters. They were kept cold for five days, then slowly warmed to facilitate a spontaneous fermentation. 15% of the fruit was left whole cluster. After completion of primary fermentation, the new wine was pressed, settled overnight, then racked to French oak barrels. The wine rested for 12 months in barrel, then the best barrels were selected for this reserve bottling.

Winemaker Notes: The heat of the summer and early fall brought the fruit to a level of ripeness that I have rarely seen in my 25 years at Bethel Heights. If the wines have a note of jammy richness, it is balanced with adequate acidity to appear fresh. The Southeast Block is one of the biggest wines we made in '03. It has mellowed considerably with six month in the bottle. All the elements are there to become a truly great wine with a bit more time in the bottle.