

## Willamette Valley Hillsides

Oregon's wine pioneers came to the Willamette Valley looking for the perfect place to grow Pinot noir – a place where longer hours of daylight and cooler growing conditions allow wine grapes to ripen slowly, with a long period of flavor development at the end of the growing season, and harvest in late September or early October. Ninety percent of the Pinot noir grown in Oregon is grown in the Willamette Valley.

But once that most fundamental choice has been made, it must be said that most of the acres in the Willamette Valley are not really suitable for growing fine wine. Indeed, most of the acres of the Willamette Valley are deep, rich valley-floor soils brought to us all the way from Montana by the Missoula Floods at the end of the last ice age. These valley floor soils are paradise for a great diversity of crops, but they can spell trouble for Pinot noir. Pinot noir at low elevations is subject to frost damage in the spring, and in such deep soils it can become overly vigorous, and unable to ripen its fruit properly.

In almost all cases, the great Pinots of the Willamette Valley are grown on hillside sites well above the valley floor. That is the common denominator of the Willamette Valley appellation, regardless of a significant diversity of soil types and weather patterns in the various sub-AVA's of the Valley.

The fruit for our 2009 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir came from a number of different vineyards within our own sub-AVA, the Eola-Amity Hills. Our own estate vineyards (Bethel Heights and Justice) provide the core of this blend, which is rounded out with fruit from several well-established nearby vineyards that we have come to appreciate.

### **BETHEL HEIGHTS VINEYARD**

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### 2009 PINOT NOIR ♦ WILLAMETTE VALLEY

Harvest dates: October 1 - 20, 2009

Fruit source: 32% Bethel Heights Vineyard,  
28% Justice Vineyard, 13% Jessie James Vineyard,  
10% Lewman Vineyard, 8% Elton Vineyard,  
7% Zena Crown Vineyard, 2% Carter Vineyard

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.2%, pH 3.59, TA 5.4 gr/Liter

5116 cases produced. Bottled July 28, 2010

Suggested retail \$28

**THE 2009 VINTAGE** got off to a slow start, but a warm May and June gave us a very successful fruit set, and 2009 delivered the most generous crop of the decade. The summer was warm and sometimes hot, with a couple of extraordinary heat spikes. September was sunny and warm, and continued dry in October but cool enough to extend hang time. The grapes were quite ripe, with great acidity and flavor development.

**VINIFICATION:** The fruit was destemmed into 1.5-ton fermentation bins and kept cold for five days before fermentation began. Following ten to fourteen-day fermentations, the new wine went into French oak barrels (10% new) for nine months.

**TASTING NOTES:** Aromas of ripe raspberry and strawberry with underlying notes of cedar and rose petals. The palate is pure raspberries and cherries with hints of orange zest and oak spice. A bright and balancing core of acidity and fine grain tannins will allow this wine to age gracefully over the next decade

**90 Wine Spectator:** "Polished, light and immensely appealing for its pretty raspberry, cream and floral aromas and flavors, lingering easily on the sleek finish."