

BETHEL HEIGHTS SOUTHEAST BLOCK

The Southeast Block is a six-acre section of own-rooted Pommard clone vines planted in 1979 on a south-facing slope between 420 and 520 feet elevation. The red clay soil is volcanic in origin, three feet deep and well drained.

The Southeast Block sits just below the Flat Block, but despite their proximity in both age and location, the Southeast Block expresses the darker and more savory side of Bethel Heights, showcasing more structure and sinewy muscle under a dense core of black fruits.

THE 2017 VINTAGE

2017 was our sixth very warm vintage in a row. Fortunately we had quite a lot of rain in the winter and early spring; total rainfall for the year was almost 20 inches above normal. Going into the growing season with the soil well-charged with water gave the vineyard the resilience it needed to withstand some heat extremes later in the summer. The summer overall was hot and dry, punctuated by a couple of significant hot spells in August and early September with consecutive days over 100 degrees, but September cooled down mercifully, with a few brief rain events that helped maintain freshness in the vineyard through the final ripening phase.

“I feel that the 2017 wines have the best natural balance we have seen out of a warm vintage since 2012. In spite of the heat the wines have terrific acidity, relatively low alcohol, and the different parts of our Estate show their personalities without being muddled by vintage.” Ben Casteel

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There's a strong thread of violet-like florals here, together with fresh blueberries and attractively spicy complexity. The palate delivers richness and depth with very round, assertively fleshy fruit texture and a long, velvety finish. Drink over the next eight years.

BETHEL HEIGHTS VINEYARD

(503) 581-2262, www.bethelheights.com



2017 PINOT NOIR • SOUTHEAST BLOCK

LIVE Certified Sustainable

Harvest date: October 9, 2017

Grapes at harvest: Brix 23.5, pH 3.1, TA 6.9 g/L

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.5%, pH 3.44, TA 6.0 g/L

Barrel aged 11 months in French oak,

33% new barrels

350 cases produced

Bottled unfiltered September 2018

VINIFICATION: The fruit was completely destemmed and settled at ambient temperature (60 F) for 4 days prior to the onset of fermentation. Due to the heat of the growing season, we elected to keep our ensuing fermentations relatively quick and our extraction minimal to preserve freshness and vibrancy. Then new wine was pressed at dryness and settled for 72 hours prior to racking to barrel.

WINEMAKER NOTES: The Southeast Block has always been defined by mutability; from the grace and purity that defined the 90s to the power and structure that became the norm in the 00s, it has resisted clear definition. The 2017 is as lissome and graceful a version of this block as I can recall. Its delicate red fruits are framed by integrated acidity and a thin veil of gossamer tannin that carries the wine to a long, balanced finish. I can say without hyperbole that of all the bottlings in which I have had the pleasure to play a part, the 2017 Southeast Block is my favorite.