

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 2018 VINTAGE

2018 was the sixth vintage in a row defined by heat in the Willamette Valley. Following a wet winter, the spring and summer were very dry and warm, leading to the first signs of veraison in early August. Fortunately our reliable marine winds kept night-time temperatures cool, preserving acidity in the fruit as it ripened, and welcome rain events in September carried the vines through the final ripening period. The very dry hot summer made for small clusters with very small berries that in many ways defined our 2018 wines. The wines are significantly darker than is typical at Bethel Heights, with increased potential for tannin.

“The dark brooding nature of the vintage is unmistakable. Not since 2008 have we seen wines with the early exuberance of fruit that one expects from a warm vintage, combined with such a lean muscular structure of tannin and acid promising significant ageability.” Ben Casteel

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This has the most striking fruit presence on the nose of all the Bethel Heights pinots with notes of blueberries and violets, as well as cocoa and blackberries. The palate has a very fleshy core of darker fruit flavors with good concentration of fruit and smoothly honed, powerful tannin. A parcel that has a real affinity with the 2018 vintage. Drink or hold.



2018 PINOT NOIR • SOUTHEAST BLOCK

LIVE Certified Sustainable

Harvest date: September 28, 2018

Grapes at harvest: Brix 24, pH 3.27, TA 8.3 g/L

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.7%, pH 3.61, TA 5.8 g/L

Barrel aged 9 months in French oak,

35% new barrels

250 cases produced

Bottled unfiltered July 26, 2019

VINIFICATION: The Southeast Block was completely destemmed into a 5-ton stainless steel tank and cold soaked for 4 days prior to onset of fermentation. To maintain aromatic intensity and, in the case of the Southeast Block, to minimize the potential for excessive tannin, we elected to keep our fermentations relatively cool (peak of 80 F) and extraction minimal to preserve freshness and vibrancy. The new wine was pressed at dryness and settled 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 2018 is a dense, imposing wine in its youth that speaks both to the character of the vintage and to the brooding, black fruited character that has been the norm for the past few years with the exception of 2017.