

THE SOUTHEAST BLOCK

The Southeast Block is a six-acre section of the Bethel Heights estate vineyard that consistently gives us wines of distinctive character. It was 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 vines are 100% Pommard clone, planted on their own roots in Oregon's pre-phyllloxera days. At 30 years old the vines are still healthy and apparently phylloxera-free. The crop is held close to two tons per acre for optimum quality.

THE 2007 VINTAGE was a classic cool Oregon vintage, similar to 2005 (and 1999 and 2001) and very different from 2006, our hottest vintage on record. In 2007, the summer provided adequate heat to ripen the fruit, and the fall finished cool, allowing the grapes to fully express their varietal character without losing acidity and without accumulating excessively amounts of sugar, as Pinot noir tends to do in hot vintages.

However, periods of rain at the end of the season meant that 2007 was a year when it definitely made a difference to have well drained soils, mature vines, and years of experience in the vineyard and the winery. The crop was thinned three times, leaves were pulled twice, and we were then able to wait through several rain events to pick when the fruit was fully mature.

Cool vintage Pinots tend to have more acid and less alcohol, and are generally more compatible with a wide range of foods than warm vintage pinots. They also tend to be more ageworthy for the same reasons: more acid, less alcohol.



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, see www.liveinc.org and salmonsafe.org.

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2007 PINOT NOIR • SOUTHEAST BLOCK

Certified Sustainably Grown

Harvest date: October 5th, 2007

Grapes at harvest:

Brix: 23.2 pH: 3.28, TA: 7.8 gr/liter

Finished wine:

Alcohol 13.2%, pH: 3.57, TA: 5.7 gr/liter

Barrel aged 12 months in French oak, 50% new

Bottled in October, 2008

149 Cases produced,

Suggested Retail \$50

VINIFICATION: 2007 was not a year we elected to ferment whole clusters as a matter of course; however, for this exceptional lot we fermented thirty percent of the fruit as whole clusters. The remainder of the fruit was de-stemmed before the five-day cold soak. It was also not a year for heavy extraction, so the fermenters were punched down only twice a day instead of three times. After the completion of alcoholic fermentation the new wine was gently pressed, settled for three days, and then racked to a variety of French oak barrels. After 12 months the best barrels were selected and blended for this single-block designated wine.

TASTING NOTES: Star Anise, cloves, and damp earth overlay the classic blueberry and briar of the Southeast Block. The palate displays a dense core of black cherry, balanced acidity, and the lovely round tannins we find in our whole cluster fermentations. This wine will certainly age gracefully over the next ten years, but I believe it could go much longer. *Ben Casteel*