



Background—The history of Pinot gris is long in Europe, from Alsace and Burgundy (some growers in the latter still consider the grape a vital part of either their white or their red wine!) down to Northeastern Italy (Friuli and Alto Adige). However, in the New World, it was Oregon winegrowers who introduced the variety. In fact, Adelsheim Vineyard is the third-oldest producer of Pinot gris in the New World. Since 1984, our production of this wine has gone from just 400 cases per year in those early days to close to 10,000 cases now.

Growing Season—Even in March of 2003, we saw some signs that it would be an early year. Although winter was as rainy as usual, spring was warm enough that bud-break occurred around Easter, and flowering was a mid-June affair. Oddly, 2003 was the third year in a row with a bountiful crop, and it took two passes of thinning to get the crop level down low enough to insure intensity. A very warm August and September meant that harvest hit us like a freight train. Similar to every variety that year, all 148 tons of Pinot gris were harvested in a mere 11 days (September 25 – October 5)...as compared to 2002, when the different sites achieved ripeness over a period of 33 days.

Vineyards—In the final blend, 93% of the grapes came from the seven Adelsheim estates on the Chehalem Mountains, with Stoller Vineyard in the Dundee Hills providing the rest. All our picking and winemaking decisions were based on the qualities of the site, with most lots kept separate during the winemaking process. As a result, we were able to achieve a lively balance of the bright, intense fruit (from higher-elevation sites on clay-loam soils) and the fuller-bodied wines (from lower sites on sedimentary silt-loams).

Winemaking— Over the last four vintages, we pushed our Pinot gris's focal point toward its primary fruit characteristics, minimizing the interference of winemaking. We harvest somewhat late (but not so late that alcohol levels go through the roof) and press gently in two stages (to avoid bitterness.) Winemaker Dave Paige and his team used a variety of cultured yeasts, each of which adds a different flavor profile to the finished blend, for slow cool fermentations to retain the primary fruit esters of the wine. Textural enhancement was provided by partial malolactic fermentation in a few of the lots, and by fermenting (though not aging) 14% of the wine in older neutral barrels. However, nothing was done to subtract from the wine's freshness quotient. Bottling took place in mid-March, 2004.

The Wine—Crisp, bright flavors have always been the hallmark of Adelsheim's Pinot gris, but especially so the last four vintages. This 2003 shows its usual lovely floral bouquet in a mouth-fillingly creamy manner. Bosc pear and Winesap apple flavors dominate the fruit profile, with an additional spiciness (allspice and lemon zest). The wine's bright intensity means that it can go with very spicy foods (Thai) or strongly flavored foods (such as ceviche) as well as the more classic poached salmon, shellfish, bisques...and the typical Thanksgiving Day turkey.

The Label—The label of this wine features Ginny Adelsheim's portrait of her older sister, Susanna Kuo. A textile artist and researcher/writer with a focus on East Asian textiles, Susanna has a special interest in Japanese stencil resist dyeing. One of her pieces hangs in the south stairwell of Portland's Keller Auditorium.

Production—We produced 9,277 cases of this 2003 Oregon Pinot gris.