



2006 WILLAMETTE VALLEY PINOT NOIR

BACKGROUND From our first vintages in the 1970's, we've endeavored to produce Pinot noir wines that were intense and yet had a certain elegance so that they would pair well with the foods we liked to eat. That was the goal in the beginning when founder David Adelsheim made the wines, and afterwards as that role was passed on to successive winemakers. Dave Paige joined us in time for the harvest of 2001 and is fully in sync with this philosophy. Over the subsequent years, has taken our wines to new levels of quality and consistency in achieving these aims. He would agree that by blending the diverse flavors and textures of multiple vineyards he is able to create a richly supple and focused Pinot noir that typifies the best of this variety as grown in the Willamette Valley and as tempered by the vintage.

GROWING SEASON Although storms carrying a lot of rain swept through Oregon in mid-January – slowing up pruning work – by the time spring rolled around, the 2006 growing season had caught up to what we assume to be “normal” timing in this day and age. Bud break occurred in the third week of March, and bloom about the second week of June. Perfect bloom weather resulted in too many clusters, each with too many berries. Thus, we had to spend a significant amount of time in “green harvest” passes to pare back the crop to what our climate could actually ripen. Harvest was accomplished in near perfect weather, warm enough that everything ripened smoothly, yet not all at once, with cool mornings for picking, and very little rain. The first Pinot noir grapes were picked September 14 with all that variety in the winery door by the second week of October.

VINEYARDS This 2006 vintage wine derives from seven of our estate vineyards in the Chehalem Mountains AVA (75%) and nine vineyards in other parts of the Willamette Valley (25%). Approximately 60% of the wine comes from several clones brought into Oregon from Burgundy, 30% is UCD 5 (“Pommard”), and the final 10% either UCD 1A (“Wädenswil”) or a clonal-blend. Soil type, appellation, vine age, and elevation varied considerably in these lots, giving Dave Paige many choices as he sought to create a unified blend.

WINEMAKING Once the grapes were in the winery, they were gently de-stemmed into temperature controlled open-top fermenters. These vats were punched down once or twice a day during the six-day pre-fermentation maceration, and then two or three times each day when the seven-to-ten-day fermentation began. Following pressing, the wine was moved to small French oak barrels, where the malolactic fermentation occurred over the winter. In the final blend, 24% of the French oak barrels were new, the rest one- to three-years-old. The wine was bottled over a two week period in late August, 2006.

THE WINE With its wide variety of origins and clones, this wine displays both red and black fruit aromas (cherries and raspberries), on the nose and the palate. In addition, one finds a light touch of brown spices (nutmeg, cinnamon, allspice) and even a little black pepper. True to our house style, it is elegantly textured with satiny, polished tannins showing in the finish. Pair it with salmon or ahi, veal or pork, poultry (think duck) or beef, and/or hearty vegetarian entrees.

THE LABEL Though the portrait of Diana Lett by Ginny Adelsheim was not, in fact, on the original label for our Pinot noir, it's been our public “face” for 26 vintages. For the 2004 vintage of this wine, we tidied up the presentation, but we retained her image to thank her for her role in the history of Oregon wine – she and her husband David Lett founded Oregon's first Pinot noir winery (The Eyrie Vineyards) – and her friendship.

PRODUCTION Our production of the 2006 Willamette Valley Pinot noir was 15,521 cases of 750 ml bottles and 1400 cases of 375 ml bottles.

