

THE CASTEEL PINOT NOIR

For many years Bethel Heights was recognized primarily for block designated Pinot noir wines from our estate vineyard. In 2002 we took a new path and produced our first Casteel Pinot Noir, a blend of barrels from several different blocks, selected to express the epitome of that particular vintage at Bethel Heights. This is our only Pinot noir that carries our family name rather than a place name, which gives us poetic license to select our favorite barrels from each vintage.

THE 2022 VINTAGE

I would sum up the 2022 vintage as *lucky*; without precedent and very lucky. Had October been anything like it normally is, we would have struggled with phenolic ripeness, analytical ripeness, really all of the ripenesses.

A very wet Spring followed by a cooler than normal start to the Summer had me concerned about how deeply into October we would probably be harvesting, and these fears were not helped by the sheer size of the crop we set, even after thinning to one cluster per shoot.

There were moments towards the end of summer when it seemed certain that we would struggle to get ripeness where we wanted, and then those moments blurred into a series of high 70s low 80s temperatures....in October. In the middle of October. I've lived in Oregon my entire life and I've never seen anything like it. Pessimism quickly became optimism as the endless Summer of 2022 rolled on for an extra month. It was the warmest October on record.

For sheer volume, 2022 was one of the most generous vintages in recent memory, and at this state of play the wines are very exciting, show tremendous potential and fascinating variations based on pick date and site.

~ Ben Casteel, October 2023



2022 PINOT NOIR CASTEEL

Certified Organically Grown

Fruit source: Bethel Heights Vineyard 114, West 777, West 115 Block 3; Lewman Vineyard 115 and Pommard

Harvest date: October 13-18, 2022

Grapes at harvest: Brix 23.3, pH 3.15, TA 6.2

Finished wine: Alcohol 13.5%, pH 3.39, TA 5.7 gr/liter

Barrel aged 11 months in French oak, 35% new barrels

Cases produced: 415 in 750ml, 100 in 375ml

Bottled unfiltered September 14, 2023

VINIFICATION: Coming in at different times from five different sections of our estate vineyards, the fruit was hand-sorted and destemmed into a variety of different vessels. After a 4-day cold soak, the fermenters warmed naturally and were gently punched down once or twice a day until fermentations reached a peak temperature of 88 degrees, then aerated once a day until pressed at dryness.

WINEMAKER NOTES: The 2022 Casteel includes five blocks selected from Lewman Vineyard and the Western slopes of Bethel Heights, which unintentionally form a straight North-South line between the two vineyards. This was born of many blind tastings at the blending table, not a conscious choice to pull from a specific vein of the property. It's comforting to know that the Casteel, in our view the best wine of the vintage, is coming not from our oldest vines, but from grafted vines ranging from 26 to 30 years of age. As we begin the bittersweet process of replanting the original vines at Bethel Heights, there is solace in knowing that we have tremendous material still at hand, and the promise of what is to come from replanting into the future.