



2014 Marine Sedimentary Pinot Noir Chehalem Mountains Appellation

Location: Chehalem Mountains is one of Oregon's newest AVAs, and a sub-appellation of the existing Willamette Valley region. This viticultural area is 19 miles southwest of Portland and 45 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. It is 20 miles in length and 5 miles wide.

Wine history: Chehalem Mountains' winegrowing history dates back to 1968 when UC Davis refugee Dick Erath purchased 49 acres on Dopp Road in Yamhill County. He aptly called the property Chehalem Mountain Vineyards. By the mid to late 1970s, there was a patchwork of vineyards in the area, including those owned by such modern wine pioneers as the Adelsheims and the Ponzis. Over the next three decades other reputable winegrowers planted roots in the area. The appellation was approved in the late fall of 2006.

Climate: Chehalem Mountains' elevation goes from 200 to 1,633 feet, resulting in varied annual precipitation (37 inches at the lowest point and 60 inches at the highest) as well as the greatest variation in temperature within the Willamette Valley. These variations can result in three-week differences in the ripening of Pinot noir grapes.

Soils: Chehalem Mountains have a combination of Columbia River basalt, ocean sedimentation, and wind-blown loess derivation soil types.

Topography: Chehalem Mountains is a single landmass made up of several hilltops, ridges and spurs that is uplifted from the Willamette Valley floor. The appellation includes all land in the area above the 200-foot elevation. They are the highest mountains in the Willamette Valley with their tallest point, Bald Peak, at 1,633 feet above sea level.

Vineyard Components: While this wine falls outside of our normal winemaking pattern since it is from an assemblage of vineyards as opposed to one specific vineyard site it still retains the idea of place as important in the overall characteristics of Oregon Pinot Noir. While we have broadened that concept away from the vineyard and to the appellation the approach to bottling this wine certainly began with the same philosophical principles we apply to our vineyard designated wines.

Wine Making and Notes: Ribbon Ridge is a small hillside stretch winding up against a steep, narrow valley that essentially winds its way out to the Oregon Coast. This valley was created thousands of years ago when a huge flood rolled through leaving this area under water for a considerable period of time. The eastern side of the valley's hills generally face south and southwest at elevations of up to around 600 feet. With the Chehalem Mountains to our east, the Dundee Hills to the south and the Coast Range only a few miles to the west this is an isolated area where you can often times actually see the weather systems go around us in a variety of directions. This little area has its own microclimate. But what truly sets it apart is the soil. The years of being under water created a soil classification known as Marine Sedimentary of which there are several sub-classifications. This is a talc-y, dry soil set atop a sandstone sub-soil. Drainage is nearly instantaneous and special efforts have to be made to aerate, feed and nurture the soil so as to promote more moisture retention. Since we do not believe in irrigating our vineyards, we have needed to be very proactive in addressing the relationship between soil management and vine health that is an everyday part of farming in Ribbon Ridge.

The Marine Sedimentary bottling takes wine from selected blocks and barrels from across multiple sites. Our entire Estate Vineyard, both Pommard (The Anklebreaker Block) and Wadensvil Clone from Olenik Vineyard and Dijon 115 and Mariafeld Clone from Lia's Vineyard created to show how the silty marine soil both drives our plants lives and produces wines that are distinct on their own; such a huge contrast to the Dundee Hills wines that we produce and in particular the soil-based Volcanic bottling that we also do. The interaction of dark fruits, mineral-driven wines, sweetness from the Dijon 115 and acid and tannin from the Mariafeld produce a wine that will appeal to those that want secondary characteristics, structure, cool minerality and restraint within the context of power to be the hallmarks of their Pinot Noir. 264 cases bottled.