



2014 Lia's Vineyard, 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 viticulture 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.

Site Characteristics: Lia's Vineyard is adjacent up the hillside from Olenik Vineyard in the Chehalem Mountain Appellation. In that part of the Chehalem Mountains vineyards lower on the hillside consist of marine sedimentary soils and vineyards higher on the hill are volcanic soils. Lia's Vineyard straddles that transition with sections of the vineyard toward the bottom being in marine soils and sections toward the top being planted in volcanic soils. The vineyard largely faces west with portions of it rolling off to the south and southwest with the western face being highly exposed and the southern face having some tree cover. Just as in 2012 we received Pommard planted in 1993 and Dijon 115 planted in 1999, the former in volcanic soil, the latter in the marine. There is a small (less than half an acre) section in the middle of Lia's Vineyard planted to the Mariafeld Clone of Pinot Noir (also known as Clone 23). This is a very rare clone in Oregon and was something that we coveted from Day 1. We were not able to obtain it until this year.

Wine Making and Notes: This, technically, is not our first year with Lia's Vineyard. We have been getting the fruit since 2010 but we have slowly been working our way into spots of the vineyard that we felt were going to make wine of a quality and character that would allow us to do it as a vineyard designate. Lia's Vineyard is adjacent up the hillside from Olenik Vineyard in the Chehalem Mountain Appellation. In this part of the Chehalem Mountains vineyards the lower hillside consist of marine sedimentary soils and vineyards higher on the hill are volcanic soils. Lia's Vineyard straddles that transition with sections of the vineyard toward the bottom being in marine soils and sections toward the top being planted in volcanic soils. This represents the Lia's Vineyard Pinot Noir bottling we were desirous of making when we first looked at the vineyard back in 2009. We still get the Pommard from the top of the vineyard and the Dijon 115 from the bottom. There is a small (less than half an acre) section in the middle of Lia's Vineyard planted to the Mariafeld Clone of Pinot Noir (also known as Clone 23). This is a very rare clone in Oregon and was something that we coveted from Day 1. We were not able to obtain it until this year. The Mariafeld is high in acidity, tannin and pigmentation and bears a markedly pitched red-fruit character to it. The combination of these three clones is in line with our vision of what this vineyard has to offer.

We used 10 barrels of the Dijon 115, 4 Pommard and 1 Mariafeld to come up the Lia's Vineyard bottling in 2014. The Mariafeld lends a spicy note to the aromatics, a noticeable lift of red fruit and brightness in the mid-palate and a sturdier base of tannins. If there is a single vineyard Pinot Noir that we make that has more immediate appeal while still having down-the-road sort of chops this has to be it. This has forward, sweet dark fruit, quite a lot of texture and just enough finishing tannin to pull it all in at the end. This definitely will drink like mad at a young age but this is still from terrific stock and has 20+ year old vines making up a wealth of its volume, so it will be fine down the road. 363 cases bottled.