



2015 Balcombe Vineyard Pinot Noir

Dundee Hills Appellation

2015 Balcombe Vineyard Pinot Noir: Balcombe Vineyard is simply one of the best vineyards we work with and every year it produces wines of terrific quality that are absolutely true to the Dundee Hills. For those of you who don't know, this site is located toward the top of the Dundee Hills on Breyman Orchard Rd. It was planted in 1990 to Pommard and we have worked with the fruit every year since 1997, so we have become pretty accustomed to how the grapes grow, ripen and ferment into wine. All of these aspects are very important pieces of making high quality Pinot Noir.

Location: Dundee Hills is a sub-appellation within the Willamette Valley located 28 miles southwest of Portland and 40 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. Rising above the low, flat floors of the surrounding Willamette and Chehalem Valleys, the Dundee Hills offer spectacular views, including Mt. Hood and Mt. Jefferson's majestic snowy peaks.

Wine history: Winemaker David Lett planted the first Pinot noir in the Dundee Hills in 1965, naming it The Eyrie Vineyard. Soon after, Dick Erath, the Sokol Blosser family and other winemakers cleared south-facing slopes to plant many of Oregon's first vineyards. They whole-heartedly believed this area would one day be an important cool-climate wine-growing region. It didn't take long for the world to discover Dundee Hills and Oregon - after the relatively unknown Eyrie Pinot noir placed among the top three wines in the 1979 Gault-Millau French Wine Olympiades, beating out more famous French labels. Today, the area remains home to many of Oregon's modern pioneer winemakers who continue to successfully grow and make premium wine. The appellation was approved in November 2005.

Climate: The Dundee Hills area is effectively an island protected from great climatic variations by surrounding geographic features. The Coast Range to the west lessens the effects of the Pacific Ocean's heavy rains and windstorms, and causes a rain shadow over the Dundee Hills area, resulting in just 30 to 45 inches of annual precipitation, most of which falls in the winter months outside of the growing season. Because of their slope and elevation, Dundee Hills vineyards benefit from warmer nights and less frost and fog than the adjacent valley floors.

Soils: Dundee Hills is known for its rich, red volcanic Jory soil, which was formed from ancient volcanic basalt and consists of silt, clay and loam soils. They typically reach a depth of 4 to 6 feet and provide excellent drainage for superior quality wine grapes.

Topography: The Dundee Hills viticulture region consists of a single, continuous landmass that rises above the surrounding Willamette Valley floors and is defined by the 200-foot contour line to the AVA's highest peak of 1,067 feet. The area comprises a north-south spine with ridges, as well as small valleys on its east, south and west sides. Dundee Hills is part of a North Willamette Valley hill chain that developed as a result of intense volcanic activity and the collision of the Pacific and North American plates. Dundee Hills is typically volcanic over sedimentary sandstone.

Site Characteristics: Balcombe Vineyard is located toward the top of the Dundee Hills on Breyman Orchard Rd. at the southern end of the Dundee Hills. Adjacent vineyards would include White Rose, Domaine Drouhin, Stonehenge (Eyrie) and some Domaine Serene sites. It was planted in 1990 to Pommard clone. In 1997, while at Torii Mor, we began farming this vineyard and getting all the fruit from the 7.25 acres and we have worked with the fruit every year since 1997 so we have become pretty accustomed to how the grapes grow, ripen and ferment into wine. The vineyard sits at about 600-700' elevation on a relatively gently, mostly west-sloping hillside with lots of exposure. The vineyard is divided into five specific sections all of which are fermented separately (this becomes important later).

Wine Making and Notes: The importance of having a relationship that in 2015 was 19 years in the works cannot be understated. Knowing how and when the vineyard ripens and how the fruit responds to different fermentation

techniques and barrel regimens is an incredible asset in winemaking that is not always afforded to a winemaker. The fruit was around 20% whole cluster fermentation, went through a standard cold soak of about 5-6 days, fermented in 1.75 ton open top fermenters and was pumped over 1x/day until fermentation began and then it was pigeaged 1x/day until going dry and then being pressed and allowed to settle for 3 days at which point the wine went to barrel. This spent a little less than a year in 4% new barrels along with a nearly equal combination of one through four times used barrels. As mentioned earlier there are five sections of Balcombe Vineyard. Four of the sections are used to create the Balcombe Vineyard bottling. The section called 1B is separated out into a different bottling. The Balcombe Vineyard bottling is certainly the quintessential Dundee Hills Pinot Noir that we make. Ever since we first bottled it in 2000 this wine has been about how the texture and the flavor co-mingle to deliver the experience that is this wine. This is consistently floral on the nose with subtle elements of red-fruit and smoked meat. The texture is silky, generous and saliva-generating to say the least. The acidity is crisp which keeps the fruit bright and makes you want to keep coming back to the glass. This wine has sneaky ageability to it since it does have such an approachable-when-young nature to it, but recent tastes of the 2001 and 2002 show those wines cruising along beautifully. Drink it for its lovely, youthful nature or save it because it will be a delicious treat 10+ years into the future. Either way you cannot lose.

Production: 571 cases bottled.