



## 2015 Estate Vineyard, Old Vine Pinot Noir Ribbon Ridge Appellation

**Location:** Ribbon Ridge is a sub-appellation of the Willamette Valley AVA that sits 22 miles southwest of Portland, 4 miles northwest of Dundee and 40 miles east of the Pacific Ocean. Ribbon Ridge is contained within the larger Chehalem Mountains AVA - which is contained within the Willamette Valley AVA.

**Wine history:** In 1980, Harry Peterson-Nedry planted the first wine grapes on Ribbon Ridge at his Ridgecrest Vineyards. Two years later, the first commercial vineyard was established with the planting of 54 acres of Pinot noir and Chardonnay. It was Yamhill Valley Vineyards who first used these grapes to make wine in 1985. Other vineyards were soon planted in this relatively small ridge. The appellation became official in 2005.

**Climate:** Protected by geographical features to the north, south and west, Ribbon Ridge's grape-growing hillsides are slightly warmer and drier when compared to the adjacent valley floors. Ribbon Ridge's moderate climate is well suited for early grape growth in the spring, consistent and even ripening over the summer and a long, full maturing season in the fall.

**Soils:** The Ribbon Ridge region contains primarily sedimentary soils that are younger, finer and more uniform than the alluvial sedimentary and volcanic soils of neighboring regions. These moderately deep, well-drained silty-clay loam soils are part of the Willakenzie soil series and are of low fertility and ideal for growing high-quality wine grapes.

**Topography:** Geographically, Ribbon Ridge is a 3.5-mile long by 1.75-mile wide ridge that extends from the Chehalem Mountains. The ridge rises 683 feet from the Chehalem Valley floor, giving it an island-like appearance.

**Site Characteristics:** There are no other vineyards we work with that are as difficult to summarize in a neat package than our Estate Vineyard. There are 18 sections of Pinot Noir based on vine age and clone (as well a section of Sauvignon Blanc), elevation ranges from 250' to 475', Pinot Noir plantings were done in ten different vintages ranging from as early as 1984 to as recent as 2010. The vineyard is mostly Pommard but there is also 3 acres of Wadensvil, 3 acres of Dijon 114 and an acre of Dijon 777. Spacing varies from 5 x 6 to 5 x 8. Some blocks are inter-planted with every other row being of one age and every other a quite different age. Two blocks are inter-planted with two rows of the same age followed by one row of a different age. To add a greater level of confusion the vast majority of the site (the 25 acres at the higher elevation) is planted directly on top of the hill with a 360 degree aspect to the vineyard. Then there is the geology of the site which is an extremely sandy Marine Sedimentary soil sitting atop a large bed of sandstone sub-soil with a water table that is very deep and highly mineralized. This is a unique site to say the least.

Relatively early on into our time here we began to conclude that there were different natures not only to the separate blocks but a distinct stylistic difference between the two sets of plantings (vines planted between 1984-1997 and the vines planted between 1998-2001 along with the new 2010 planting). Since we dry farm here to encourage the downward growth of roots the older plants and the younger plants are at different root depth levels in the sub-soil and consequently have access to different levels and types of water, nutrients and minerals. The root system is what feeds the plants and ultimately the fruit on the vine and in this soft Marine soil this translates into very different flavor and texture profiles in the grapes. The Estate bottling consists of 13 separate sections of the vineyard that were planted in the 1997-2001 (and 2010) window. The Estate Old Vine bottling can come from the remaining 5 blocks although sometimes 1 or 2 of those blocks are bottled separately.

**Wine Making and Notes:** As the Estate vines tap their roots deep into the soft sub-soil they eventually make contact with the mineralized water on the property. This brings a whole new element to bear in the flavor and texture profile of the wine. This bottling comes from the original 1984 planting of Pommard which was fermented with 33% whole clusters, a 1990 planting of Pinot Gris that was grafted to Pommard in 2002 and a 1997 planting of Pommard on a steep west facing slope. The fruit from these two blocks were 100% de-stemmed, went through a standard cold soak of about 4-7 days depending on the block, fermented in 1.75 ton open top fermenters and was punched down

1x/day before being pressed and allowed to settle for 3 days. This spent a little less than a year in just 8% new barrels along with a combination of one-six times used barrels.

The difference between the older and younger blocks here is always pretty amazing to people. Our water is spring fed and very minerally in nature. That is what these older vines have tapped into and that is what they pull up and put into the fruit. Savory and bringing in both black and red fruit spectrums so this has a wide range in the mid-palate. Ultimately this wine is defined by the mineral laden “ribbon” that intertwines the fruit and carries the flavors onto the sinewy tannin structure underlying the wine. This is refined and elegant while still being surprisingly broad shouldered.

**Production:** 1,056 cases bottled.

