



## 2023 Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir

**AVA:** Ribbon Ridge

**LOCATION:** North Valley Rd.

**SOIL TYPE:** Wellsford (Marine Sedimentary)

**YEAR PLANTED:** Various; 1998-2010

**CLONAL MATERIAL:** Pommard, Dijon 114, Wadensvil

**VINEYARD SIZE:** 30-acre vineyard

**PICKING DATES:** Multiple days in September

**TONS/ACRE:** Various

**OWNERS:** Patricia Green Cellars

**PRODUCTION:** 1,414 cases bottled

**2023 Vintage Story:** *2023 was my 30<sup>th</sup> vintage making wine in Oregon. I had always wondered what a vintage would be like if everything basically just went right. Well, that's the 2023 vintage. Superlative weather throughout the spring and summer leading into another earlier (by historical standards) harvest where the weather was excellently agreeable. This is both a bountiful and beautiful vintage. Across the board every vineyard performed to their highest level. Every bottling, and we did 34 bottlings of Pinot Noir, is at an apex. In short, at least in the here and now, I think this has a very good case for being considered the greatest vintage in Oregon's history. At the very least, this is the best Patricia Green Cellars of our 24 vintages.*

**Site History:** The vineyard's original planting dates back to 1984, making it the second oldest established vineyard in what is now the Ribbon Ridge AVA. Plantings of entire blocks have happened in 1986, 1987, 1990, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2010. The site includes 25.5 acres of Pinot Noir (20 acres of Pommard, 3 acres of Dijon 114, 3.1 acres of Wadensvil and 1.4 acres of Coury Clone), 2.5 acres of Sauvignon Blanc and 2 acres of Chardonnay (Dijon 76 and 96). Patricia Green Cellars purchased the property in July, 2000. About 20 acres were planted at that point, including Pinot Gris, which was mercifully grafted over to Pinot Noir in 2002. The vineyard houses the oldest Sauvignon Blanc vines in the Willamette Valley. It has also produced the only Pinot Noir to receive a score of 100 from a major, national wine publication.

**Site Characteristics:** The vineyard starts, lightly sloped in the middle/bottom of the hill at the winery and moves quickly up a steep slope and eventually all the way to the top of the hill where it falls of 360 degrees, planted in every direction. The blocks represent palpable differences in aspect, elevation, clone and vine age. This has allowed for numerous bottlings based upon unique wine characteristics making it the vineyard with the single most Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir bottlings having come from it in the state of Oregon. The vineyard has a thin layer of extremely dry and silty topsoil that sits upon mostly a hill of shale and sandstone. Toward the very bottom of the site some deeper, very soft blue-gray clay becomes the subsoil. It is highly drained, erosion-prone soil. The vineyard is farmed entirely organically and is dry farmed. Large, deep stands of trees on the east and west sides of the property frame the vineyard, provide shade at certain times of the day and act as a home for a variety of woodland creatures including mountain lion, bobcat, black bear, coyote and deer. Unlike vineyards even 2-3 miles to the east, the Estate Vineyard receives very little wind during the growing season. The planted portion of the property ranges from 235' to around 485'.

**The Blocks:** The vineyard is divided into seventeen individual sections wrapped 360 degrees around a hillside that are all picked, fermented and barreled separately. The primary blocks of the Estate Vineyard bottling are:

- **Bobcat Block:** This is a 1998 planting of Pommard named for a family of bobcats that has been living in the forested area adjacent to it. They have been spotted innumerable times by staff and winery guests as they have no apparent fear of humans. The vines roll and slope to the southeast and dip into a shaded, wooded area that provides relief from the intensity of the sun this block receives. This is one of the first blocks that gets picked each year.
- **Ceremony Block:** Planted in 2000 to Pommard, this block is named after a cleansing and healing ceremony Patty and Jim did with their friend Julianne Allen shortly after buying the property. This was

in an effort to provide some energetic change at a time when the vineyard and property truly were in need of that. This block lies adjacent to the east of the Wadensvil Block in the northeast corner of the vineyard. Just as that block took many years to come into its own, this block has gone through some trials to reach the point it has. Initially planted as a nearly 3.5 acre block it wasn't until 2018 that we realized that around 1.75 acres of it would be better suited for Chardonnay and that portion was grafted in 2019 allowing for the remainder to begin to come into focus.

- **Chomper's Block:** Planted to Pommard in two different yet adjacent sections over 2000 and 2001. This block fills in the ends of the blocks of the Hallelujah and Sammy's Blocks planted in 1990 and 1987 respectively. Due to being situated completely against the stand of trees to our east this block was initially called the Last Block because of when it was picked. At over 20 years of vine age that has changed and the block was renamed after a wonderful Corgi that lived here for nearly 16 years.
- **East Etzel Block, Dijon 114:** This is part of the interplanting in the two Etzel Block that was done in 2001 to synch up the spacing in the blocks that were planted around this older block. This was originally planted in 1986 but with a spacing of 12-feet between the rows. In 2001 we removed a row of the old Pommard and interplanted two rows of Dijon 114 to bring the spacing to 8-feet in width. These barrels are generally reserved for the Etzel Block bottling.
- **Fuego Block:** The overall steepest section of the vineyard planted dramatically across the face of the hillside above the winery. This section of Pommard was cleared of brush in 2009 (and the block gets its name from a huge fire that was barely contained during the clearing of the scrub on the hillside) and planted in 2010. This steep southwest facing block has struggled through its first phase of existence but the rewards of that struggle are now beginning to show in the wines.
- **West Etzel Block, Dijon 114:** This is part of the interplanting in the two Etzel Block that was done in 2001 to synch up the spacing in the blocks that were planted around this older block. This was originally planted in 1986 but with a spacing of 12-feet between the rows. In 2001 we removed a row of the old Pommard and interplanted two rows of Dijon 114 to bring the spacing to 8-feet in width. These younger vines have struggled both with some shading from the older vines and also a very tall stand of trees to the west that cast an afternoon shadow over a portion of this block. At over 20-years of vine age now, that struggle has paid off in mature vines no longer impacted by these phenomena.

**Farming Practices:** We have done the management of this property internally since we purchased it in 2000 with the exception of 2014 and 2015 when Sterling Fox's management service did the work. Also, at that time, the vineyard was switched entirely to organic farming practices and remains so to this day. The vineyard has always been dry farmed.

**Picking Dates, Tonnages, Tons/Acre:** Due to the size of the size of the site and the breadth of differences between blocks the picking schedule is vast. In 2021 it ranged from the Fuego Block being picked on September 7<sup>th</sup> to the Grapes of Wrath Block being picked on September 25<sup>th</sup>. Tonnages vary widely as well but in 2021 averaged right at a very healthy and bountiful 3.0 tons/acre.

**Vinification:** Most fruit in this bottling was entirely destemmed but about 30% of the barrels were sourced from fermenters that contained between 50-60% whole clusters.

**Winemaking:** Fermentations were managed exclusively by pigeages to ensure gentle handling, extraction and delicate tannin construction. Cold soaks were generally 4-5 days across all the fermenters. Full fermentation from beginning to pressing ranged from 16-19 days. A 48-hour settling of pressed wine occurred prior to being racked to barrel. All wines were on full lees until assemblage for bottling. Bottled without fining or filtration.

**Barrels:** This 59-barrel bottling consists of just 4 new barrels (7%), a combination of sixteen once and twice-filled barrels (27%) and a large selection of neutral barrels (66%). Wine was in barrel until late July and bottled in late August allowing for around 10 months in barrel.

- Bobcat Block: 31 barrels
- Ceremony Block: 5 barrels
- Chomper's Block: 13 barrels
- East Etzel Block, Dijon 114: 3 barrels
- Fuego Block: 4 barrels
- West Etzel Block, Dijon 114: 3 barrels

**Notes:** The Estate Vineyard bottling exists because it is both delicious and unique but also because it shows a particular aspect of this vineyard and the Ribbon Ridge AVA as a whole. This bottling is made up nearly entirely from vines with between 14-26 years in vine age, with a large amount being over 20 years in vine age which is when we begin to see the signs of true maturity in our vineyard. We have discovered that at around 25 years of vine age we often see a change in the vines' nature as they become bigger and healthier plants with deep root systems. Before this

happens, the vines tend to produce fruit that is bigger, bolder, plumper and more succulent at a young age than the older vines' wines. Therefore, the Estate bottling is the richest and most precocious of all our Estate Vineyard Pinot Noirs. The fruit will have a black/blue tinge to it, the mid-palate should be generous and supple and the finish should have some structure but in a fairly generous manner. Despite what might be described as a more "obvious" style bottlings dating back to 2003 and 2002 are showing incredibly well at this point. The wine finished with numbers of a TA of 5.3, a pH of 3.61, a free sulfur level below 25 ppm and a total sulfur below 70 ppm.

**Tasting Note:** *Please be aware that I am loathe to write tasting notes on our wines. Each person has an individual palate and therefore unique experiences with every wine. Also, what a person has tasted in their life and what they enjoy informs them on what a wine is like. If I tell you a wine tastes like cherries and you either have never had a cherry or don't like cherries what I am saying is irrelevant information. That being said I have been asked to include my thoughts on each wine (since we have so many).*

The 2023 Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir is perhaps a wine that is so stylistically out of its price point classification it seems awkward. Unlike the Chehalem Mountain and Freedom Hill Vineyard bottlings that show and shine ways that one would expect of single vineyard Oregon Pinot Noirs priced at this level, the Estate bottling is simply more...regal? This has the infrastructure of all our block designated Estate Vineyard wines. The fruit mixes between blacker berries and swirling deeply red fruits but all that sits upon a well of tannins that is quite deep, certainly deeper than one would expect for a larger bottling priced in this manner. So, that being said, the question to you reading this is whether you want a wine that is priced well below its pedigree, stature and winemaking capacity, or don't you? If this wine is simply too much for you, we understand but do not sympathize.