PATRICIA GREEN CELLARS

2023 Estate Vineyard, Chardonnay

AVA: Ribbon Ridge

LOCATION: North Valley Rd.

SOIL TYPE: Wellsford (Marine Sedimentary)

YEAR PLANTED: 2000

CLONAL MATERIAL: Dijon 76 and Dijon 96

VINEYARD SIZE: 30-acre vineyard, 2-acre block

PICKING DATES: September 17th

TONS/ACRE: 2.44

OWNERS: Patricia Green Cellars

PRODUCTION: 305 cases bottled

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 they 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 Block: In 2000 we planted the largest remaining section of unused land on the property. It was north of what would become to be known as the Hallelujah Block and east of the Wadensvil Block. Despite sloping to the north and east we anticipated very good things for this section of Pinot Noir. Over the years those expectations went largely unmet. Largely the fruit that came off the block was fine but not special. For years we chalked the underwhelming results to younger vines. However, by the later 2010s it became clear that something was amiss. This block was adjacent to two of the best Pinot Noir blocks in the vineyard yet produced grapes that were nothing like its neighbors'. In 2018 we decided to break the block into two blocks. The upper block, adjacent to the Wadensvil, was fermented separately from the lower portion that ran down a secondary hill within the block to two stands of trees. The results were striking. The upper portion produced exactly the sort of wine we had been expecting while the lower portion was quite dull. Despite having only produced 3 bottlings of Chardonnay at this point we made the decision to graft over the lower portion of the block to Chardonnay. This, in Oregon, is a pretty radical notion. Nonetheless, we felt it was going to be the correct decision. In the winter of 2019 we bartered for cuttings of fruit from our AVA neighbor, Brick House Wines. We received cuttings of Dijon 76 and Dijon 96 and top-grafted them massale-style over the roughly 2-acre section. We did not receive any fruit in that vintage (which is normal) and did not use the Chardonnay in 2020. So, 2021 marks the inaugural Estate Chardonnay and the latest coming into its own of any block in the entire site.

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: 4.88 tons harvested September 17th

Winemaking: All the fruit was immediately pressed after picking, allowed to settle, racked and inoculated with a yeast specifically designed for Chardonnay. The wine finished primary in two sandstone amphoras and two concrete cubes after about four weeks. It was then racked into barrels and the wine was in barrel, with no extra SO2 addition beyond the minimal amount the juice was pressed with, for 14 months. It was then racked to stainless tank and given one SO2 addition and was allowed five months in tank. This wine went through a complete secondary fermentation and due to this received only a light filtration prior to bottling.

Barrels: In 2021 we made the decision to use only Damy barrels for our Chardonnays. We had been using Damy as part of the Chardonnay bottling since 2017, but we have been only been purchasing Damy cooperage puncheons for our Chardonnay since 2019. In 2023 we have 2 changes to the barrel program that have a significant impact on the nature of the wine. This was done in the continuing effort to understand our Estate Vineyard Chardonnay's capacities and to increasingly make better quality wine. Change 1 is somewhat minor seeming. Within the universe of Damy barrels there are several possible selections. We are now exclusively using a grade of barrel called Imperial. This is Damy's absolute top barrel specifically designed for Chardonnay. Tonnellerie Damy created the Imperial barrel that is a blend of 3-year seasoned Allier, Jura and Vosges staves with a proprietary 2 hour light long toast. After trials and requests in France, the purpose was to create a "chauffe a coeur " toasting style where the entirety of the width of the stave is toasted but remains beautifully noisette colored. This style of toasting adds very subtle notes of grilled bread, spice and nuttiness to the wine while respecting the fruit's purity and the vineyard's terroir. Frankly, it's an incredible barrel. Change 2 is more significant. With one of the sandstone amphora rather than simply fermenting in it we allowed the wine to age for the full year in amphora. The completely non-porous vessel keeps the wine fresh, is obviously free of oak and creates an incredible and unique texture that adds a level of dimension to the Chardonnay without adding extra barrel impact. The results speak for themselves.

Notes: This is our second bottling of Chardonnay from our Estate Vineyard after grafting over from Pinot Noir in 2019. Is this still a work in progress? Absolutely. Our Chardonnay program goes back to just 2015 and in that time we have learned a lot and come a long way even after starting at a relatively decent high-point. Still, we are adapting our farming, our barrel program, our fermentations and the results are positive. We are a small player in Oregon's Chardonnay revolution (or whatever you want to call what has been going on with Chardonnay in the state for the past dozen years or so) and we likely walk a bit of a different path than the winery's seen as leading the way, we are on a trajectory to making Chardonnay the rivals our best Pinot Noirs.

The wine finished with numbers of a TA of 5.4, a pH of 3.35, a free sulfur level below 35 ppm and a total sulfur below 100 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 Chardonnay takes a leap from the 2021 (which I like quite a lot) in that we are now using exactly the barrels we want and with quite a high percentage of new oak, however the sandstone amphora cuts the flavor impact of the barrel while also infusing it with a textural component that even barrels cannot elucidate. It's important to note that the predominant style of high-end Chardonnay in Oregon is made in what is called a reductive style. That is a method that in intended to limit oxygen contact with the wine as much as is possible and the result are very intense wines with a distinctly "matchstick-y" aroma and oily texture. This is not that. We are looking for fruit and freshness but we want those to carry the day. This wine is floral and racy and has a deep lemon-tinged sensation to the fruit flavors. While the barrel program is noticeable it is a subtle contributing note that underpins the rest of the grape's flavor. This wine has great harmony and is easy to drink, but should evolve nicely Even our 2015 bottling is still in good shape and this wine is assuredly more deeply considered and better made.