



Background—The intent we bring to producing and blending the “Oregon” Pinot noir (which, by the way, comes entirely from Yamhill County in the north Willamette Valley) is to unite the elements – especially the fresh fruit flavors – that typify Pinot noir in this region, albeit as tempered by the vagaries of the vintage. By blending the diverse flavors and textures of multiple vineyards, Winemaker Dave Paige can produce a richly supple and focused Pinot noir wine.

Growing Season—By March of 2003, there were strong signs that we were in for an early year. After a typically rainy winter, spring started out warm enough that bud-break came before Easter and flowering took place in mid-June. Unusually, 2003 was the third consecutive year that we were “blessed” with a heavy crop-load - it took two passes of thinning to get the crop level down low enough to insure flavor intensity. A very warm August and September meant that all the grapes seemed to ripen at once. Instead of a “leisurely” paced normal harvest of six or more weeks, all the grapes for this wine were picked between September 18th and October 6th (with over 80% of the grapes coming into the winery in a 9 day rush.)

Vineyards—Adelsheim’s 2003 Oregon Pinot noir is blended from six vineyards. The five farmed by us, providing 95% of the final blend, are located on the south side of the Chehalem Mountains. The remaining five percent came from Temperance Hill Vineyard situated farther south in the Eola Hills. The sites on basaltic-origin soils, both in the Chehalem Mountains and the Eola Hills, contributed red fruit flavors and sweetness. The Chehalem Mountain sites on sedimentary soils bring a certain black fruit character, though red fruits predominant in the finished wine.

Winemaking—We harvest by hand and gently de-stem into temperature-controlled, open-top fermenters. These are punched down once or twice per day during a 4-6 day cold soak, then two or three times per day once the fermentation begins. Decisions about fermentation temperatures and the point of pressing are made with a view to maximizing extraction of fruit flavors while avoiding extraction of bitter tannins. Once in barrel (all French oak, 22% new) the wine underwent malolactic fermentation and 10 months of aging before the blend was assembled. Throughout the process our methods were aimed at increasing complexity while preserving the intense fruit that characterized the vintage. The wine was bottled over four days starting August 23, 2004.

The Wine—Pure red fruits are the brightly dominant characteristic of the 2003 Oregon Pinot noir, both in the nose and on the palate. Wild cherry and raspberry, especially, jump out for the taster. A spicy quality brings a light gingerbread note, and one also finds a touch of rose petal, anise and cassia. As for the mouthfeel, liquid silk might be its best description. Suggested food pairings are all those middle-weight dishes we love to eat – ahi, salmon, poultry (particularly duck!) veal, pork and hardy vegetarian entrees.

The Label—Ginny Adelsheim’s label portrait features Diana Lett, who along with her husband David founded The Eyrie Vineyards, the first winery to produce Pinot noir in the Willamette Valley. In addition to paying tribute to the Letts’ pioneering role in the history of the Oregon wine industry, this iconic label, first used for the 1981 vintage, celebrates our 34-year friendship with the Letts. In the background is the view from the original Adelsheim winery on the Chehalem Mountains.

The Quantity—We produced 7288 cases of full bottles (12/750ml) and 1406 cases half bottles (12/375ml) of this 2003 Oregon Pinot noir.