



## 2005 WILLAMETTE VALLEY PINOT NOIR

**BACKGROUND** The intent we bring to producing and blending the Willamette Valley Pinot noir 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 produces a richly supple and focused Pinot noir.

**GROWING SEASON** Summer-like weather appeared in late January in the northern Willamette Valley, pushing activities in the vineyard over two months ahead of schedule, with bud break occurring quite early, on March 15th. Then, in late March, one of the driest winters on record turned in to one of the wettest springs. Cloudy, rainy and cool weather at bloom time, June 8-12, was the cause of reduced crop levels (approx. 75% of normal) for the vintage. These rains, however, saturated the soil and kept vines from any sign of water stress until late August. Cool temperatures throughout September and October and light rains beginning at the very end of September, meant slow-ripening fruit and challenging decisions about when to pick. With good vineyard management to control the effects of the moisture, we were able to avoid rot or mildew issues, allowing fruit to hang in wait of optimal fruit ripeness and flavor profiles. Cooler temperatures translated into sound acidity and ideal flavor development in the wines.

**VINEYARDS** Our 2005 Willamette Valley Pinot noir is blended from several vineyards in the northern part of Oregon's Willamette Valley. The final blend consisted of 80% estate-grown fruit, from vineyards located on the south side of the Chehalem Mountains.

**WINEMAKING** We harvest by hand and gently de-stem into temperature-controlled, open-top fermenters. These are punched down once 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, 20% new) the wine underwent malolactic fermentation and 10 months of aging before the blend was assembled. As always, throughout the process methods were aimed at increasing complexity while preserving the intensity of fruit. Bottling took place in mid-August, 2006.

**THE WINE** This wine displays red fruit and dark cherry characters, both in the nose and on the palate. Wild cherry and juicy raspberry flavors intermingle with hints of spice. Pair this fruit-forward, satin-textured beauty with salmon or ahi, veal or pork, poultry (think duck) and hearty vegetarian entrees.

**THE LABEL** In 2004, for the first time in its 23-year history, the label art for this wine was given a “facelift.” Care was taken to keep the label's identifiability while modernizing its look and feel. We kept the lady, loved by so many, but removed the framing and brought the typography into line with the rest of our labels. Ginny Adelsheim's original 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 celebrates our 35-year friendship with the Letts. In the background is the view from the original Adelsheim winery on the Chehalem Mountains.

**THE QUANTITY** We produced 10,213 cases of 12x750ml bottles, 1,001 cases of 12x375ml bottles and 60 magnums (1.5L) of our 2005 Willamette Valley Pinot noir.

