

CHEHALEM

FALL 2009

MAKING A STATEMENT *Or, To Be Rather Than to Seem*

By Harry Peterson-Nedry

Esse quam videri is my favorite Latin phrase—well, after *in vino veritas* (in wine there is truth) of course. “To be, rather than to seem” embodies a core of genuineness, humility, and “what you see is what you get,” eschewing pretense and hype for substance and valuing core principles rather than surface and gloss. The concept is admittedly also a great excuse for “aw-shucks” souls like me who downplay self promotion and braggadocio, preferring to retire to the background to observe and stay protected.

A WINE

This fall, we are releasing a very small quantity of a wine we think makes a statement in the sense of *esse quam videri*. And we call it, simply enough: STATEMENT. It is a statement about the vintage, 2006, which begins an occasional “declaring” of great vintages (we have reserved a 2008 cuvée for bottling next spring as its successor). It is also a statement about our Ridgecrest vineyard and the nobility of its old vines, coming entirely from the 5-Acre Pommard block at our original site, which was planted in 1982. Further, it is a statement about our style and standard for Pinot Noir—rich and fully complex with three-dimensionality, but above all else elegance. In its rarity of fewer than 100 cases, this Pinot makes a final statement about the importance of small measures of time, high standards, and crisp focus.

As such, this wine permits us a vehicle for honoring people who had short measures of time to influence us, but whose impact was timeless. This first vintage honors my brother, my son, my nephew, and my cousin, all who died early and left holes. They did not *seem* to have an influence on those around them, they *did*.

To be requires focus, sacrifice, a search for improvement, long-term approaches to work, creativity, valued relationships, principled underpinnings, trustworthiness, humor, humility, generosity, and prioritizing the greater good over the personal—unpretentious and “we”-based. *To seem* is all about superficiality, impressions, PR, patina, good looks, and self promotion—narcissism and “I”-based.

The statements we value and hope are reflected in what we do at Chehalem, admittedly with less-than-perfect regularity but with intent and passion, include:

PEOPLE

Wine brings people together and helps establish comfort and community. It is arguable that relationships and deeds are the two most important facets of a richly successful life—what we do and with whom we do it. Enjoyment requires people and a sense of satisfaction that often comes from accomplishment.

In the wine business, we are lucky to marry the two, with employees soon becoming more like members of a family than hired on, and distributors and customers extending that family as the years pass. We have distributors who remember our first vintages (hopefully not because they still have them in their inventory!) and direct customers who discuss past vintages as if those bottles are their own children growing better with maturity (because they DO still have them in their cellar inventory). We have past employees who stay in touch, come to lunch, drop off dogs to romp in the large dog pen, and raise (CONTINUES NEXT PAGE)



(Above) Chehalem 2006 Statement Pinot Noir—pure, elegant, and reflecting simple, basic principles.

families that are our family, and current employees who find richness in working hard (together with the challenges, freedoms, and disagreements that come with it), making great wines, and serving our customers as well as they can.

Oregon's wine community is one of collaboration, not competition. Perhaps it will not always be that way, but I'd like to think it will endure, primed by where we live and the family-owned and artisanal nature of our work. We enjoy each other's products and, more so, each other. We have created IPNC, OPC, Steamboat, the Oregon Wine Board, the Oregon Wine Institute, ¡Salud!, the Willamette Valley Wineries Association, AVA groups, varietal groups for Riesling and Chardonnay, Viticulture groups, and the list goes on. Working as a group to create education, marketing, and celebratory events is unsurpassed because we can achieve while working side by side. We create a rising tide that floats all boats. We help each other grow better grapes and make better wine. We sell each other's wines. We support each other's charities. We conjure up exciting new adventures and invite our friends to join us. We laugh at each other's jokes. Like a family, we know each other long enough to deeply mourn the passing of old and young friends, and to rejoice in new generations joining us with renewed energy and vision.

STANDARDS

Chehalem derives initially from the personal vision I have for how to live life, run a business, and make wine. However, initial visions are refocused



(Above) Oregon wineries on the road (or ocean) helping sell "Oregon" earlier this year, reprising a 1999 Oregon Invasion of Hawaii: Harry and Didi with the Etzels, Hatchers, Bergstroms, Adelsheim, Montalieu, Alstrins, and our distributors at JMD. Based on tans, sunny venues aren't normal, except for the Hawaiians and Bill Hatcher.

CHEHALEM 2006 STATEMENT OREGON PINOT NOIR RIDGECREST VINEYARDS RIBBON RIDGE

Every few years a vintage appears that blends climate, vineyard, and winemaking almost perfectly. So much so that it makes a statement about why we do what we do. With this single, small bottling we "declare" the vintage special.

We also ask that this statement celebrate those who would have enjoyed it, but are achingly missing today: Ian, Alan Dale, Seth, and Judson.

Am7

14.95% ALC. BY VOL. • 750 ML
CONTAINS SULFITES • PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY CHEHALEM INC.
31190 NE VERITAS LANE
NEWBERG, OR • 503-538-4700
CHEHALEMWINES.COM

GOVERNMENT WARNING: (1) ACCORDING TO THE SURGEON GENERAL, WOMEN SHOULD NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES DURING PREGNANCY BECAUSE OF THE RISK OF BIRTH DEFECTS. (2) CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IMPAIRS YOUR ABILITY TO DRIVE A CAR OR OPERATE MACHINERY, AND MAY CAUSE HEALTH PROBLEMS.

by others' contributions, including partners, employees, and customers, and by experiences of the journey itself. Structural underpinnings are critical for consistency as the mirror into which we periodically look to validate who we are, but the three-dimensionality of the Chehalem body comes from the day-to-day exercise of our values, such as:

Quality Above All Else—

Forward-thinking design, rigorous and ongoing experimentation, implementation without cutting corners, and analytical evaluation are necessary both in the vineyard and winery. Quality is defined by satisfying the customer, short- and long-term, and providing value in products and service. We sincerely believe that doing things better will always pay off, making better wines will be recognized.

Lead, Don't Follow— It may be safer and probably more profitable to choose other wineries' proven ideas or directions and follow them in winemaking and marketing, but innovation and excitement don't happen that way. Although we can't do everything, we are usually present in leadership roles when new things happen, such as the Oregon Riesling Alliance (ORA), Oregon Chardonnay Alliance (ORCA), AVA steering committee, Chehalem Mountains AVA board, Ribbon Ridge AVA coordinator, Oregon Pinot Camp (OPC) board, Willamette Valley Wineries board, Oregon Collusion Group (distributor retreat), Oregon Wine Board, ¡Salud! board, Oregon Wine Symposium, and more.

White AND Red— When I began appreciating wine, I noticed few wineries did *both* red and white wines well, at least not at top-quality levels. The vision at Chehalem from the beginning was to change that, to focus as much on cutting-edge whites as Pinot Noir, to appreciate the ability of the Willamette Valley's cool climate to make finesseful whites as well as the Holy Grail of Pinot Noir. We now make 60% white and 40% red, both to the same exacting standards in the vineyard and winery, both accenting a need for elegance, complexity, texture, perfect balance, and ageability. We think we have succeeded in being known for

GENERATION TWO ON BOARD By Harry Peterson-Nedry

Wynne Peterson-Nedry has joined Chehalem full-time as Assistant Winemaker, as of June.

Her decision to enter the business mirrors what has happened at several of our friends' wineries, as second generations assert themselves and embrace what they had every reason to dismiss, considering the abuse they endured growing up in pioneer wine families. Grapevines were babysitters, attention was often focused on business survival, trips were most often to wine regions rather than seashores, swimming pools were idle Pinot Noir fermentors, and money went less to impressive clothes and cars and more to trellis wire and barrels.

Wynne and her brother Ian were loved and well cared for. Their soccer games forced the shutdown of winery operations even during harvest, and attending the right school, which included long commutes in the early morning and late afternoon, took precedence over everything else. And they secretly loved the wine industry. Her return is the best validation of our way of life and the legacy of this industry in Oregon.

After receiving a chemistry degree from Bryn Mawr College, Wynne spent four years in two research lab jobs, gaining perspective and developing skills to contribute at Chehalem. She took advice from friends in the wine industry and returned to school to become even more capable of helping take Chehalem and, by extension, the Oregon industry to the next level of accomplishment, receiving her Master's degree in Enology and Viticulture from UC Davis in 2008. She has worked harvests twice in New Zealand and once on a grant in Burgundy.

Wynne has broad responsibilities to learn most facets of the business at Chehalem, focusing initially on winemaking, grapegrowing, and marketing. Currently, she works most closely with Mike Eyres and Molly Hodgins, as well as with me.

Wynne has settled down back at home, one sign being her getting a dog (a Chehalem requirement, it seems), a bloodhound/boxer named Holden. Another sign is her only cringing now when I point out that she and Ridgecrest, our oldest vineyard, are the same age. I'm pleased and proud.



both, but always need to push the envelope—leading not following—as we innovate to make INOX® the standard for unoaked Chardonnay, push Riesling with our mother block of all clones, create an Oregon Sekt-style Riesling, and plant Grüner Veltliner to investigate a new reflection of white wine.

Blends and Single Site— As with many decisions, stylistic approaches to winemaking may not be black and white, right or wrong. Quality in Pinot Noir and in some whites like Riesling can center on a wine's ability to reflect a certain site's predictable and complex palette of nuanced characteristics—flavors, textures, aromas, acidities, etc. There is a magic to transparently showing a sense of place.

There is an equally compelling argument to blend that limited set of traits with complementary traits from other sites, to create a wine that is not necessarily true to a single small place, but is likely a better wine—i.e., the resulting wine synergistically being better than the sum of its parts. Chehalem believes both options have merit, and so we bottle single vineyard as well as blends of Pinot Noir and Riesling.

Environmental— Oregon makes us all sensitive to environmental issues, by weight of its natural beauty and bounty. To jeopardize this special place intentionally is a sin. To not search for ways to mitigate the problems we all face in climate change, resource depletion, species extinction, and power generation is irresponsible. The wine industry is a "canary in the coal mine" regarding many of these issues, so it is logical that the industry in general and Chehalem in specific embrace efforts to achieve



carbon neutrality, to practice sustainable viticulture and winemaking (through the industry's LIVE and OCSW programs, respectively), and to think through and lead efforts to seek solutions to climate change and protection of agricultural lands. We'll discuss how we practice sustainability in a future newsletter.

Consumer Sensitivity— To properly serve our customers, we must care about their concerns, almost before they know what their concerns are. This has prompted us to continually improve product reliability, transitioning from natural corks to screwcap closures, with *all* our 2008 wines including reserves closed this way. It has urged us to protect Oregon's and other wine regions' place names by supporting strict labeling laws. It has kept us from shipping or storing wines in extreme temperatures. And, it has encouraged us to develop aids to help consumers know what they're buying, such as better defining winegrowing appellations (or AVAs) and printing the new sweetness scale on our Riesling labels.

THIS RIESLING IS:



Arts and Charities— When all is said and done, one of the most important measures of who we are is what we value with our time, energy, and dollars; i.e., who we help and what culturally comes to the surface when business is over. Arts and charities benefit as we succeed.

All this matters, since we believe *esse quam videri*. 🍷



IN THE VINEYARD

WHICH GRAPES ARE THE MOST DIFFICULT TO GROW?

By Molly Williams Hodgins

PEOPLE OFTEN ASK HOW DIFFICULT VARIOUS grape varieties are to farm. Sometimes the question is broad: "Is it easier/more expensive to grow reds or whites?" Other times it is more specific: "Is Pinot Noir the most difficult/expensive grape to grow?" The cost question is a bit easier to answer because some blocks like our little patch of Gamay Noir are trickier to grow than Pinot Noir, but are generally not more expensive to farm.

Chehalem's particularly challenging acre of Gamay Noir aside, the general question of whether red or white varieties are more difficult to grow depends on many factors. We handle vineyard-floor management (how much if any tillage) and soil amendments the same for red and white grapes. Vineyard blocks, and even sections of blocks, are managed individually, and we do what is best for each, regardless of variety. In-season cultural practices are largely the same for all our varieties, with some exceptions. For example, leafing, when we remove some of the leaves on the shady side of the



(Above) Riesling at harvest in early November, fully ripe and with a perfectly controlled amount of botrytis.

vine to allow for more sunlight and air movement in the canopy, is very important for high-quality Pinot Noir but may have negative impacts on Riesling flavors. This is because certain *norisoprenoids*, which are responsible for the kerosene notes in Riesling, are correlated to light. If Riesling were leafed the same as Pinot Noir or Chardonnay, it might smell more like petrol right away, and we prefer that particular character to develop over many years.

Our disease-control and prevention programs are primarily the same for all our varieties, again with the exception of Riesling. One disease we control is botrytis, a late-season bunch rot that is generally not desired in grapes destined for table wine. However, when making late-harvest dessert wines, botrytis, also known as "noble rot" is encouraged. With our Riesling, we've found a little botrytis contributes to complexity and concentrates flavors, so we occasionally omit the products that control botrytis from our Riesling program to allow for a small amount to develop late in the season.

Harvest decisions may also be slightly more difficult to make for Riesling. We harvest all our varieties, white and red, when sugars are sufficiently high, acids are balanced, and the grapes

have developed ripe flavors. For Pinot Noir, imagine comparing the taste of a ripe strawberry or cherry to a slightly green one. The metric is similar for other varieties, too. Riesling is usually last to be harvested, and deciding when to pick it is frequently determined independent of sugar, acid, or pH levels, whereas for other varieties, these indices track together rather nicely. In 2008, we picked our young Riesling early and with low sugar content because it tasted perfectly ready. More commonly, we wait for the Riesling flavors, which may not develop until early November, long after everything else has been picked.

The expense of farming depends on perspective. Our farming costs per acre are similar across all varieties. However, different varieties produce different yields, and the more grapes produced per acre, the lower the cost per ton and therefore the fruit cost per bottle. Without question, Pinot Noir is the lowest yielding variety we grow, both naturally and by design. To ensure focused flavors and speedy ripening before fall rains begin, we drop some of the fruit from all our vines. With Pinot Noir vines, we tend to drop a bit more than the others because the results are worth it. A one-acre block of Pinot Noir with a certain vine and row spacing might yield 2.5 tons, but the same block planted to Chardonnay might yield 3 tons, and if planted to Pinot gris, Pinot blanc, or Riesling might yield 3.5 tons. The outlier is Grüner Veltliner. Although we don't yet have much experience with this variety, after two years of production, it is clear Grüner will produce considerably more than our other vines.

Alas, the question of which varieties are the most difficult to grow is a subjective one. Of all the grapes grown by Chehalem, Pinot Noir is the most expensive to produce, but more because of low yields than high inputs—although we do spend more time in certain high-end Pinot blocks. Riesling is slightly less expensive to grow because of higher yields, simpler canopy management, and less disease control. However, it is unique and requires more *special* attention while certain Pinot Noir blocks may get *more of the same attention*. And Gamay Noir and Grüner are stories for another day! ♣



NEW RELEASES

2008 Pinot Blanc A variety occasionally maligned by me, I can't disparage this vintage in any way. Tight, lime, honeydew melon, lemon curd, honey, and white blossoms aromatically, with a rich, full, lush, and oily palate texture. This wine shows a full range of fruits from citrus to spiced apples and pear, with an underlying minerality that is compelling. The balance is perfect, with great, bracing acid and a silky, sweet finish. I may have to eat my normal words, or better yet, drink them.

2008 Reserve Dry Riesling Platinum, yellow-green hues, with lovely white stone fruits, hard Christmas candy, lemon zest, orange marmalade or sugared peel, spice, and minerality on the nose. White peach, citrus, allspice, and mineral flavors continue on the palate, but with a huge, sweet impression countered by great acidity. The wine speaks impressively of weight, balance, and richness.

2007 Stoller Vineyards Pinot Noir Always stellar in cooler years, this wine has effusive red fruit, overlain with earthy, metallic, leathery notes, supported by very good acid, a long finish, good alcohol, and a small amount of tannin firmness—i.e., perfectly balanced.

2007 Ridgecrest Vineyards Pinot Noir Medium red, with a blue youthful hue; smoky, barrel-accented, black and red fruit aromas, with a suave savory character; mineral and earth flavors, with cherry-cranberry tartness, raspberry sweetness, and a punctuating grip on the finish; tight, great acid, balanced. Will reward aging.

2006 Statement Pinot Noir Red-blue-black, very intense color; deep plum, licorice, and pepper flavors; red, complex fruit; lovely length and finish—exceptionally elegant; fine tannin. A once-every-few-years wine. 🍷 — HARRY



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

FREE SHIPPING! Cool weather means wine in time for the holidays. Place a case order by October 31, 2009, and get **FREE UPS GROUND SHIPPING**.

BEST WISHES

All the best to Brian Irvine, our former cellarmaster, who has moved just up the road to Penner-Ash Wine Cellars. His dog, Bear, still comes to visit on Fridays.

HARVEST 2009 ONLINE Check out Harry's harvest blog at chehalemwines.com to follow our progress for Vintage 2009.

NEWBERG ARTWALK The first Friday of each month from 5 to 9 p.m. Check out a local artist and taste featured wines at the Tasting Room in downtown Newberg.

CLASSIC WINES AUCTION FALL WINEMAKER DINNER SERIES Nov. 10, 2009.

We are pairing up with Wildwood restaurant in Portland and Crowley Wines as part of this intimate dinner series, limited to just 20 people per venue. Sign up at classicwinesauction.com.

¡SALUD! WINE AUCTION Nov. 13 & 14, 2009.

Now in its 18th year, this is Oregon's premier Pinot Noir event. Highlights include a Friday tasting at DDO followed by a

Saturday dinner at the Governor Hotel. Proceeds benefit seasonal vineyard workers' healthcare. Call 503.681.1850 or visit saludauction.org.

FALL PRE-RELEASE TASTING

November 21, 2009. Skip the crowds and visit us the weekend BEFORE Thanksgiving. We'll be introducing our first-ever 2006 Statement Pinot Noir (only 93 cases made!) as well as tasting our new fall releases. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the winery.

PINOTFEST 2009

November 20 & 21, 2009. This "public tasting of a sexy wine" takes place at Farallon restaurant in San Francisco. For more information, check out farallonrestaurant.com.

WINE COUNTRY THANKSGIVING

November 27th–29th, 2009. The perfect time to introduce friends and family to Chehalem and taste our fall wine line-up. \$10 tasting fee. **NOTE: We will be open only at our Tasting Room in downtown Newberg; the winery will be closed.**

CLASSIC WINES AUCTION March 2–6, 2010.

This year's lineup encompasses a "Week of Wine" with events from intimate winemaker dinners to a black-tie auction. Proceeds benefit numerous Oregon-based family and children's charities. Visit classicwinesauction.com. 🍷





WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

"With all of the attention focused on Willamette Valley's Pinot Noirs, their **excellent white wines often get overlooked**. This is a shame because there is plenty of quality as well as superb value and **no one is doing it better than Chehalem.**"

—Jay Miller, *The Wine Advocate* (August 2009)

"I don't know how Chehalem is viewed by other critics, but I have found this property to be **one of the top 10 in Oregon**, with a clear focus, a style that emphasizes breed and elegance, attentive and thoughtful winemaking in every vintage.... All Chehalem wines are highly recommended...." —Paul Gregutt, *Paulgregutt.com* (August 25, 2009)

2006 Statement Pinot Noir

93 *Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar*, May/June 2009, Josh Reynolds Ruby-red. Explosive perfume of black raspberry, boysenberry, potpourri and smoky minerals. Lush, creamy red and dark berry preserve flavors are enlivened by a slow-building minerality and pick up suave spiciness with air. An alluring pinot with excellent finishing clarity and clinging sweetness. As powerful as this is, there's no excess weight or fat.

2006 Reserve Pinot Noir

92 *The Wine Advocate*, October 2008, Jay Miller Toast, earth notes, raspberry preserves and cherry pie compose a formidable bouquet leading to a rich, layered, nearly opulent wine with excellent balance and a long, fruit-filled finish.

2007 Ridgecrest Vineyards Pinot Noir

90 *Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar*, May/June 2009, Josh Reynolds Tangy, tightly focused strawberry and raspberry flavors open with air and pick up a deeper black cherry quality. The mineral note repeats on the finish, which is impressively pure, focused and long.

2007 Corral Creek Vineyards Pinot Noir

90 *Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar*, May/June 2009, Josh Reynolds Bracing red fruit flavors are given a refreshingly bitter edge by notes of cherry skin and cracked pepper, but turn sweeter on the back end. Finishes juicy and very long, with a strong echo of red berries.

2007 3 Vineyard Pinot Noir

★^{1/2} *Washington Post*, August 12, 2009, Dave McIntyre Lively, elegant, light in body and silky in texture with a nice herbal note, this wine reflects a blend of sedimentary and volcanic soils...

2007 Cerise

90 *The Wine Advocate*, August 2009, Jay Miller ...Cherry red in color, it has a fragrant perfume of cranberry and wild strawberry leading to a ripe, racy, easy-going wine designed for immediate gratification.

2006 Ian's Reserve Chardonnay

94 *Wine Enthusiast*, February 2009, Paul Gregutt This is certainly the finest Ian's Reserve Chardonnay ever made. A softly appealing entry leads gracefully into a remarkably complex wine that puts the lush barrel flavors of butterscotch, toffee and toasted hazelnuts right up front... Remarkably concentrated, the wine lasts a full two minutes or more in the mouth.

93 *Wine Spectator*, May 31 2009, Harvey Steiman Bright and lively, this juicy wine is fragrant with lemon, lemon blossom and melon flavors, lingering on the delicate finish.

2007 Reserve Pinot Gris

92 *Wine Enthusiast*, February 2009, Paul Gregutt Rich textural flavors that bind lightly tropical fruits to searing minerality. Concentrated and complex...

2008 Reserve Dry Riesling

91 *The Wine Advocate*, August 2009, Jay Miller ...Offers up an aromatic array slate/mineral, petrol, spring flowers, apple, and citrus. Vibrant and dry on the palate, it has plenty of flesh covering its lively acidity.

2008 Grüner Veltliner

90 *The Wine Advocate*, August 2009, Jay Miller ...A spicy effort with dry, crisp, mineral-accented aromas and flavors. Ripe and well-balanced, this lengthy wine may well evolve for 1–2 years and drink well for five.

2008 Stoller Vineyards Pinot Blanc

89 *The Wine Advocate*, August 2009, Jay Miller Aromas of baking spices, cinnamon, apple, and white peach. Vibrant on the palate, this well-balanced, lengthy wine will drink well for 2–3 years.

☞ For more reviews of our wines, visit chehalemwines.com.