

CHEHALEM

2009 CORRAL CREEK VINEYARDS PINOT NOIR

The Wine

This wine is the single-vineyard Pinot Noir from Corral Creek Vineyards, the vineyards surrounding the winery, and recently the source of very consistent, balanced wines, without extremes of fruit, acid, tannin, or barrel. They have become a favorite of those who want elegance without having to wait years for it to appear from the musculature of bigness.

The Vineyard

Corral Creek, although not our oldest estate vineyard, was begun in 1983 by John and Diane Howieson, founders of Veritas Winery from whom the vineyard was purchased in 1995. A 32-acre vineyard predominantly planted to Pinot Noir, with significant reworked plots of Dijon-clone Chardonnay and Pinot Gris, and both new grafts of Riesling and a heritage 1.1-acre block of 26-year-old Riesling, it is nestled on a low bench above Corral Creek. Soils are Laurelwood, a predominantly blown sedimentary soil series (i.e., loess) that, although being low in elevation, is well drained and not terribly fertile.

The Vintage

The 2009 vintage may be one of the best, with nice balance in all ways for both reds and whites—very good quality and yields as well as good ripeness and acids. The closest vintage in memory might be 2002. It was the type of vintage to satisfy winemakers AND accountants, with yields in the 2.5–3 tons/acre average this year, compared to 2–2.5 in normal years, and with high quality demanding only patience awaiting flavor development. Fruitfulness caused some problems early on, with large berries and full clusters pushing off berries in the cluster, allowing early-harvested blocks to develop botrytis and require sorting. Later blocks were pristine and, assuming patience (and if nothing else, we're patient!) to await flavor development rather than picking on simple analytical numbers like TA and brix, will be as good as any wines we've made, especially for Pinot Noir.

STATS

Harvest Data:	Harvested 10/12–10/13/09 @ 25.4-25.8 brix, 3.39-3.41 pH, and 5.7-6.1 g/L TA, from 2.0-2.9 tons per acre cropload
Fermentation:	16-18 days of total fermentation with 7-10 days pre-maceration; all native fermentation
Cooperage/Aging:	Aged for 11 months in French oak barrels, racking once, with 31% new, 54% one-year prior use and 15% two-year prior use
Bottling:	Crossflow filtered; bottled 9/20/10
Wine Selection:	Selected barrels from three fermentation lots
Bottling Analyses:	15.0% alcohol, 5.3 g/L TA, 3.78 pH
Cases Produced:	292 cases
Suggested Retail:	\$45
Release Date:	May 2011

Winemaker's Comments

Brilliant medium garnet, with spice and pure red cherry aromatics; cherry and chocolate flavors, mild tannin and an earthy finish; as always laser focused, bright, balanced and light on the palate. A pure and focused red pinot noir, delicate and fine boned.