

CHEHALEM

2009 WIND RIDGE VINEYARDS PINOT NOIR

The Wine

This wine represents the future, being from the *fourth* harvest of our newest vineyard block plantings in our Ridgecrest vineyard, and adjoining both Ribbon Ridge and Wind Ridge Roads. It is a precocious wine that will age well, projecting full Pinot Noir stature, with complexity, color, fruit extraction, and structure as well as the elegance of older vineyards. This is not unusual for initial wines from excellent sites. We will be watching closely to see if in the next few years it weakens slightly, as the vine-centered balance transitions to site and soil balance. Like other Ribbon Ridge Pinot Noirs, it is characteristically brawny, briery, dusty, and black-fruited, with currant or cassis at times, and elegance or rusticity determined by winemaking style.

The Vineyard

Wind Ridge is our most recent block of plantings at Ridgecrest, our oldest estate vineyard and the initial vineyard in the Ribbon Ridge AVA. It is a 55-acre property, currently planted to Pinot Noir, Riesling, and Grüner Veltliner. Planting began in 2003 and continues today, with 20 acres currently planted. The 14 acres of Pinot Noir include 7+ acres of Dijon clones and 6+ acres of Pommard clone. Spacing is 2,200 plants per acre and vines are planted on 3309 rootstock. Soils are in the Willakenzie series, including Bellpine, Wellsdale, and other well to moderately drained ocean sedimentary soils. Excellent acidity and a finesseful texture and finish, despite sizeable extraction capabilities, should be hallmarks of the vineyard. Being relatively high in elevation at 500 to 600 feet, once mature, vines from this site will be harvested late in the season.

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 9/27–9/29/2009 @ 24.7-25.2 brix, 3.11-3.23 pH, and 6.2-6.6 g/L TA, from 1.8-2.3 tons per acre cropland.
Fermentation:	14-18 days total skin contact, 6-11 of that pre-maceration, native yeast fermentation.
Cooperage/Aging:	Aged for 10 months in French oak barrels with 40% new, 30% one-year prior use and 30% 2-year prior use.
Wine Selection:	Pommard, and Dijon clones 667, 777, and 115.
Bottling:	Bottled 9/20/2010
Bottling Analyses:	14.6% alcohol, 3.47 pH, and 5.9 g/L TA
Cases Produced:	186 cases
Suggested Retail:	\$45
Release Date:	May 2011

Winemaker's Comments

Deep purple-garnet, with red and black fruit and pepper aromatics; great weight and emollience, with a firm tannin grip and balance for aging; blackberry and black cherry flavors extending in a long finish—voluptuous, in a word. Showing true Ribbon Ridge characters and emphasizing how great this vineyard will be, considering this is only its 7th growing season and fourth harvest.