



## **2014 Mt. Jefferson Cuvée Pinot Noir**

### **History**

Cristom Vineyards named our Willamette Valley Pinot Noir, Mt. Jefferson Cuvée, in 1994 after Mount Jefferson (10,495 feet, 3,199 m), located in the Cascade Range, due east of the winery and dramatically visible from our tasting room. 'Mt. Jeff' is crafted in a vibrant and expressive style and has earned a reputation for consistency making it among the most popular wines on restaurant wine lists in America.

Mt. Jefferson Cuvée is a blend of the Cristom estate Pinot Noir vineyards along with exceptional fruit we source from neighboring vineyards in the Willamette Valley. The vineyard sites we have thoughtfully selected over the years are planted on a variety of soil types, elevations and aspects and represent the Willamette Valley Appellation as a broader whole. The vineyards are farmed by committed winegrowers we are proud to partner with, some for more than two decades, each and every one making a contribution to the 'Mt. Jeff'. Each vineyard site adds to the character, fruit and structure of the wine, giving Mt. Jeff its deserved reputation as one of the most stylistically consistent Pinot Noirs in the world.

After tasting multiple times through every lot of the vintage, it is the 'Mt. Jeff' blend that our winemaker crafts first. Whole-cluster fermentations by native yeast followed by extended aging in French oak are the hallmarks of the Cristom winemaking style. This wine ages in barrel for twelve months and can stylistically be the most fresh and approachable of the Cristom Pinot Noirs in its youth. You can call it your 'school-night' Pinot.

### **Vintage Notes**

The 2014 vintage will be remembered as one of the great vintages in Willamette Valley winegrowing history. A warm, but nearly ideal growing season delivered the rare combination of abundant quantity and exceptional quality fruit that developed into aromatic wines of balance, depth and concentration. The season got off to a warm and dry start with the earliest budbreak and bloom we have recorded at the Cristom Estate in our history to that point - a full two weeks earlier than our twenty-year average. Growing conditions were mostly dry and warmer than normal throughout the spring providing a great environment for flowering and fruit set and the vineyards produced heavy clusters and large berries. The warm weather conditions continued throughout the summer leading to record high temperatures and the earliest start date to harvest in over two decades. The 2014 vintage broke the previous record for heat accumulation during the growing season, set in 1992.

With such exceptional vine fruitfulness and set, we made the deliberate decision to thin more modestly than we historically have per vine, leaving more fruit spread out across the canopy. Our reasoning behind keeping more clusters on the vine in 2014, was given the unusually warm growing season, we were trying to gain hang time at the end of the season. If we thinned more aggressively as we do in an



average year, we feared we would shorten the season and the fruit would result in high sugars and green flavors. We hung just over 2.8 tons/acre in many areas of our estate vineyards as opposed to our twenty-year average of 2.0/tons acre. Our gamble paid off, and the expected abundant quantity and additional hang time combined for dark and concentrated fruit with balanced acids and sugars without experiencing any heat stress. We picked the estate Pinot Noir grapes between September 9<sup>th</sup> and September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Truly a year to remember, the 2014 harvest gave us a range of wines from refreshing and vibrant to more rich, powerful and concentrated wines that remain graceful with balance and moderate alcohol.

The 2014 harvest began on September 9<sup>th</sup> picking the first tons of Pommard clone Pinot Noir off of Louise Vineyard that surround our parking lot harvested at 24.6 degrees Brix. We continued to consistently pick small amounts of optimally ripe fruit from all four estate Pinot Noir vineyards each day between September 11<sup>th</sup> - September 20<sup>th</sup> harvested in a range of sugar ripeness between 23.3 degrees Brix and 24.9 degrees Brix. The first purchased fruit came in from Guadalupe Vineyard in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA on September 15<sup>th</sup>, picked at 25.9 degrees Brix and was some of the ripest fruit we saw all year. Over the next five days through September 20<sup>th</sup>, we picked consistently each day bringing in nearly all of the purchased fruit. It was again fruit from the Yamhill Carlton AVA from Hirschy Vineyard, and a vineyard in the Dundee Hills AVA, Arcus, that was the ripest fruit that came into the winery in 2014. After a short break in picking, the last estate fruit was harvested from Eileen Vineyard on September 27<sup>th</sup> and the last of the purchased fruit came in from Hyland Vineyard on October 3, 2014 and Amalie Robert Vineyard on October 9, 2014. The 2014 Mt. Jefferson Cuvée is a blend of sixteen different vineyard sites, including all four of our estate Pinot Noir vineyards. All of the vineyard sites are in the Willamette Valley and come from four appellations including: Eola-Amity Hills, Dundee Hills, McMinnville and Yamhill-Carlton.

In the glass, the 2014 Mt. Jefferson Cuvée is showing like a classic Willamette Valley vintage with bright, red-fruit aromatics, elegant, balanced tannins and persistent acidity. We found impressions of pomegranate, Rainier strawberries, raspberries, Dark Hudson cherries, cocoa powder and sweet pipe tobacco along with earthy and dusty notes that are complex and intriguing. It is a mid-weight wine that is defined by its balance of smooth, seamless tannins and luscious acidity with good persistence.

**Vineyard Sources** 63% Estate fruit—Eileen Vineyard, Jessie Vineyard, Louise Vineyard, Marjorie Vineyard – balance from: Amalie Robert, Arcus, Canary Hill, Carter, Feltz, Guadalupe, Hirschy, Hyland, Methven, Lillies, Symbion, Tunkalilla  
**Clones** Dijon (113, 114, 115, 667, 777, 828) Pommard & Wädenswil

**Appellation** Willamette Valley

**Winemaking**

- Hand harvested and hand sorted fruit
- 40% whole clusters
- No cold soak before primary fermentation
- Minimum effective additions of sulfur and tartaric acid
- Native yeast fermentations

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- 1-3 punch-downs daily in 1-7 ton open-top fermenters
- Gently pressed in a pneumatic bladder press, moved to barrel by gravity and never racked, unless necessary
- Undergoes a full malolactic fermentation in barrel
- Fined with egg whites, unfiltered

**Aging** 12 months in French cooperage, 10% new oak. 7 different coopers, including: 39% Tonnellerie François Frères, 25% Sirugue, 14% Tonnellerie de Mercurey, 8% Tonnellerie Deferrari, 6% Seguin Moreau, 5% Tonnellerie Rousseau, 3% Tonnellerie Remond.

**Bottled** November 18 - 22, 2015

**Alcohol** 13.5%

**Total Acidity** 6.3 g/L

**pH at Bottling** 3.66

**Production** 355 Barrels; 8,390 cases