



2015 Estate Pinot Gris

History

Cristom Vineyards planted 5.1 acres (2.06 hectares) of Pinot Gris vines on the estate in 1993 on a gentle east-facing slope. The vines were planted at the lowest elevation on the property greeting visitors at the driveway and rising from 200 feet to 350 feet (61 m to 107 m). Planted at a high density of 1,815 vines/acre (4,485 vines/hectare), the Pinot Gris block often produces a lifted floral and citrus-tinged wine that typically combines zesty, mineral driven accents with a distinctive creamy finish. Cristom has been producing a single expression of estate-grown Pinot Gris since 1996.

The Cristom Pinot Gris planting is distinctive on the estate because it is entirely planted over ancient flood deposits known as Missoula Flood silts and marine sediments. These soils greatly impact the growth and vigor of the vines and the ripening of the fruit. Our Pinot Gris block can be divided into two, roughly equal halves, a west side and an east side. The west half of the Pinot Gris has two different glacio-lacustrine Missoula Flood soils known as Helmick and Woodburn. Glacio-lacustrine sediments are the siltier Missoula deposits that can be found mantling the foothills to about 330 feet (100 meters) above sea level. The western half of the block has been predominantly classified as Helmick. Helmick soils have a silty surface with a subsoil of clay of more mixed mineralogy composed mainly of smectite clays. The clay proves to be a viticultural challenge because smectite clays have high shrink-swell property, that is they swell when wet and shrink and crack when they dry out, more so than other soils on the estate. These soils hold a lot of water in the winter and spring, and tend to be droughty in late summer, so they can stress the vines and lead toward riper fruit. To grow the highest quality fruit possible in these soils, we felt we needed irrigation to control water late in the season and we retrofitted the vineyard in 2002. Due to the silty soil with a heavy clay layer that dries out early in the season, the west half of the Pinot Gris is almost always the first fruit to be picked each vintage.

In the southwest corner of the Pinot Gris block, vines are planted in a nutrient-rich Willamette Silt, named Woodburn. Woodburn soils series are young silts left behind from the floods caused by ancient Lake Missoula at end of the last Ice Age around 15,000 to 13,000 years ago. Vines can be vigorous in these rich soils and we work hard to manage the canopy and use cover crops to slow the vegetative growth and direct the vines' energy into the fruit. We have chosen two different devigorating rootstocks to plant over the different soils to help us manage these viticultural challenges.

The east half of the estate Pinot Gris block is planted in two different marine sedimentary soils that range from moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained Alfisols named Wellsdale and Dupee. Lying atop mother rock of fractured sandstone and siltstone, the Wellsdale soil on our site has some of the Missoula Flood sediments in the upper foot or two, but the main part of the soil profile is



formed in an older soil that we call a paleosol. These older soils are more weathered than the flood deposits, and contains material derived from the marine sandstone and siltstone parent rock. The Wellsdale on our site is loamy and very deep, and the sandy nature of the upper horizon of the soil profile allows water to drain reasonably well and promotes early ripening.

Dupee soil is significantly more clayey than Wellsdale, and it runs down the middle of the eastern half of the Pinot Gris and up to the northern edge of the block. The uplifted marine sedimentary rocks of the Oregon Coast Range underlie the Willakezie soil series and its cousin soils such as Wellsdale and Dupee. The Dupee mapped at our site is also very deep, but because these soils are transitional to Helmick soils where the substratum is smectitic clay, they can dry out early in the season and progress ripening. Picking typically starts in the western half of the Pinot Gris in the Missoula Flood Silts and progresses down the hillside as the marine sedimentary soils quickly catch up and ripen the fruit early in the season.

Mesoclimate

The maritime climate at Cristom Vineyards has moderately warm days and especially cool nights, allowing the vines to retain acidity and produce intense and fragrant aromas and flavors. The estate Pinot Gris is planted on the lower slopes of our site and is significantly impacted by the cool Pacific Ocean breezes that flow through the Van Duzer Corridor. The corridor allows cool marine breezes to flow east into the Willamette Valley and moderates high summer temperatures, cools the vines, and moves air through the canopy to reduce disease pressure. This cool ocean air results in lower average temperatures at night than the northern Willamette Valley, and helps us to maintain good natural acid structure in the wines. Still impacted by the winds, the estate Pinot Gris is partially protected by a tree-line that separates the lower and upper hillsides on the estate.

Due to our altitude and location on the 45th parallel, there is a high diurnal temperature variation at our estate – meaning that there is a significant difference (often 35 degrees or more) between the daytime high and nighttime lowest temperature during the growing season. This significant temperature shift helps to preserve natural acids in the grapes by allowing the vine to shut down at night, slowing the ripening process, often resulting in more hang-time on the vine and later picking dates.

Farming

Farmed sustainably since we purchased the property in 1992, all of the estate vineyards have been certified sustainable by Low Input Viticulture and Enology (LIVE) since 2007.

Vintage Notes

In 2015, the Pinot Gris vines got off to a warm and dry start with the earliest budbreak we have recorded at our estate since 1992 – a full 3 weeks earlier than our twenty-five year average. Warm weather continued through the spring and summer leading to the earliest bloom we have recorded at the estate, a full two weeks ahead of a twenty-year average. The weather conditions were prime for a heavy fruit set



and the vineyard produced heavy clusters and large berries. From the beginning of the growing season it looked to be an early harvest and record highs continued through the summer leading to the earliest start date in over two decades. The generous weather continued all throughout September and we began picking the Pinot Gris on September 4th, 2015. As flavors ripened and developed we continued to pick Pinot Gris on September 8th, September 15th and finally finishing on September 17th as we moved east down the hillside. At Cristom, along with evaluating the chemistry we always make our picking decisions based on flavors and this year the Pinot Gris came to the winery in a range of sugar ripeness. The estate Pinot Gris ranged from 21.4 degrees Brix and 3.3 pH at the western edge of the 5.1 acre block to a very ripe 24.7 degrees Brix and 3.34 pH at the bottom of the hillside.

In our effort to continuously improve our wines, the 2015 Estate Pinot Gris was divided into two separate lots: half of the grapes were whole-cluster pressed; and the other half of grapes were crushed into the pneumatic bladder press and then gently pressed. We were trying to understand the aromatic and palate differences of these different techniques and determine if we had a preference. The whole-cluster pressed fruit developed into a delicate wine with bright, refreshing acidity and floral aromatics. The crushed fruit was more defined by its phenolics with greater texture, weight and mouth-feel. The resulting 2015 Estate Pinot Gris is a blend of these two distinctly different lots and the combined wine takes the bright, floral aromatics from the whole-cluster fruit and the depth and mid-palate from the crushed fruit to form a complete and complex wine. Both lots were fermented using a commercial yeast, fermented dry, underwent a full malolactic fermentation and then aged on its lees in tank for six months. It was then racked off its lees, lightly fined using Bentonite clay and finally filtered prior to bottling.

The 2015 Estate Pinot Gris exudes aromas of lime blossom, orange oil, lemon verbena, Bosc pears, and white peach out of the glass. The wine is stylistically a dry and food-friendly Pinot Gris with rounded edges and a creamy mouth-feel from the full malolactic fermentation and aging on its lees. On the palate, the wine offers focused notes of lime pith, citrus rind, Jonagold apples and a spicy clove character on the finish. Tasted, June 2016

Origin 100% Estate fruit

Sub-Appellation Eola-Amity Hills

Appellation Willamette Valley

Soils Missoula Flood Sediments, including: Helmick, and Woodburn. Marine Sediments, including: Wellsdale, Dupee

Winemaking

- Hand harvested and hand sorted, sustainably farmed estate fruit
- Gently pressed in a pneumatic bladder press
- Fermented on its lees, using commercial yeasts, in stainless steel tanks.
- The wine undergoes a full malolactic fermentation after primary fermentation
- The wine ages on its lees in tank, after malolactic fermentation, for 6 months
- Minimum effective additions of sulfur
- The Estate Pinot Gris is lightly fined with Bentonite and filtered



Bottled April 11, 2016
Alcohol 14.5%
Total Acidity 5.1 g/L
pH at Bottling 3.37
Production 1,621 cases