



2015 Estate Viognier

History

When founder of Cristom Paul Gerrie first began planting new vines on the estate in 1993, he chose to plant 1.25 acres (0.506 hectares) of Viognier and be among the first to pioneer the varietal in the Willamette Valley. Paul appreciated and admired the Calera Wine Company wines while he was living in Pittsburgh, PA prior to starting Cristom. Owner of Calera, Josh Jenson, first planted Viognier on a limestone slope in 1983 making him one of the first winegrowers in America to plant the varietal. Paul loved the Pinot Noir, Viognier and Chardonnay Calera was producing in the 1980's and hired winemaker Steve Doerner in 1992 after his fourteen years at Calera. With our first release of Estate Viognier in 1996, Cristom became one of the first wineries to produce an estate-grown Viognier in the Willamette Valley.

The original vines are planted at the high density of 2,311 vines/acre (5,710 vines/ha) in 15.5 million year old Columbia River Basalt soils that are shallow and stony at the top of the hill and get deeper moving down the east-facing hillside. The shallow Ritner basalt soil at the crest of the block has a natural devigorating effect on the vines, slowing vegetative growth and focusing the plants energy on fruit production. At the foot of the hill on the eastern edge of the vineyard are very deep basalt soils called Jory, known to be mineral rich and very well draining allowing the roots to drive deep in the ground.

After several successful vintages, a planting of 1.25 acres (0.506 hectares) of Viognier was put in the ground in 2003 just below the original vines in the basalt soils. After cool growing seasons in 2007, 2008 and 2010, Cristom made the decision to graft half of the estate Syrah over to Viognier in 2011 making the total block 3.744 acres (1.515 hectares). The grafted vines extend down to the lowest parts of our hillside from 340 feet to 270 feet (104 m to 82 m) into Missoula Flood Silts directly adjacent to the Syrah plantings and are planted at a lower density of 1,210 vines/acre (2,990/ha). These Missoula Flood silts are very deep lying over basalt and are some of the most vigorous soils on the estate.

The Cristom Estate Viognier exhibits the pure, and nearly textbook, characteristics of this varietal, with aromas of orange blossoms, honeysuckle, clover, and anise as well as the ripe fruit aromas of peach, apricot, and lychee. Slightly viscous on the palate, with bright and mouth watering acidity that support the fruit structure of the wine, it is well integrated and perfectly balanced.

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 Viognier 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 Viognier 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 Viognier vines got off to a warm and dry start with the earliest budbreak we have recorded at our estate since 1992. 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 average – setting us on pace for our earliest harvest ever. The weather conditions were prime for a heavy fruit set and the vineyard produced heavy clusters and large berries. The 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 Viognier on September 11th, 2015. As flavors ripened and developed we continued to pick Viognier on September 17th and finished the following day on September 18th as we moved east down the hillside into the younger and grafted vines. At Cristom, along with evaluating the chemistry we always make our picking decisions based on flavors and this year the Viognier came to the winery in a range of sugar ripeness. The estate Viognier ranged from 23.3 degrees Brix and 3.29 pH in the upper field, to a very ripe 25.1 degrees Brix and 3.4 pH from fruit grown at the bottom of the hillside in the Missoula Flood Silts.

Constantly trying to improve our wines is a paradigm we live by at Cristom. In that effort, the 2015 Estate Viognier 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 Viognier 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 combination of native yeasts and two commercial yeasts in neutral French oak barrels and stainless steel drums. Most of the barrels fermented dry and underwent a partial malolactic fermentation and then aged on its lees in barrel for nine months. It was then racked off its lees, lightly fined using Bentonite clay and finally filtered prior to bottling. With a white flower bouquet redolent of honeysuckle and jasmine, barely perceptible sugar and a creamy mouth-feel from the partial malolactic fermentation and sur-lees aging, this is an enjoyable and serious food wine.

Origin 100% estate fruit

Sub-Appellation Eola-Amity Hills

Appellation Willamette Valley

Soils Columbia River Basalts including: Jory, Witzel, Nekia; and Missoula Flood Silts including: Woodburn, Willamette and Helvetia

Winemaking

- Hand harvested and hand sorted, sustainably farmed estate fruit
- Gently pressed in a pneumatic bladder press and moved to barrel by gravity, and never racked, unless necessary
- Barrel-fermented in a combination of neutral oak barrels and stainless steel barrels using a combination of native and commercial yeasts.
- The wine undergoes a partial malolactic fermentation after primary fermentation
- The wine ages on its lees in barrel, after malolactic fermentation, for 9 months
- Minimum effective additions of sulfur
- The Estate Viognier is lightly fined with Bentonite and filtered

Bottled August 31, 2016

Alcohol 14.0%

Total Acidity 5.8 g/L

pH at Bottling 3.48

Glucose/Fructose 2.4 g/L

Production 674 cases