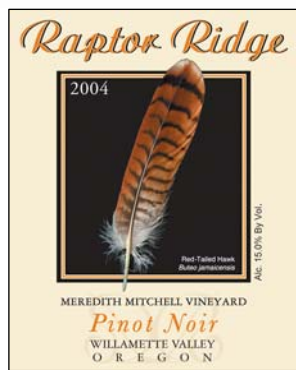




Raptor Ridge



2004 PINOT NOIR **Meredith Mitchell** **Vineyard**

Released March 2006
144 Cases Produced

93 Points
Editors' Choice
Wine Enthusiast
May 2006



In the Vineyard

Susan Meredith and Frank Mitchell's Vineyard is located 5 miles southwest of McMinnville, Oregon, in the Coastal Mountain range. Soils are a shallow Yamhill variety, with broken basalt scattered throughout. Low yields, rocky soil, and pronounced ripeness contribute to a jammy intensity. The own-rooted Pommard clone vines are trellised in an odd fashion that Frank and Susan refer to as "California Sprawl." The poor soil and devigorating trellising typically contribute to a lower crop set at around 1.5 tons per acre. The open canopy and heightened sun exposure cause thicker, darker skins and inky, intense wine. Drought stress at this vineyard pushed us to invest in drip irrigation, which ensures capture of the lush nuances and intensity at this site when rainfall is below average. On October 2, 2004, the "Martha" Block came in at 23.7 Brix, and "Alta" came in at 22.4 Brix. pH, typically at a balanced 3.34, came in at 3.09 and 3.10. TA was a bit sharp at 7.6 and 8.3.

At the Winery

Freshly destemmed grapes completed four-day cold soaks in their own juices; separate tanks were inoculated with different strains of commercial yeast isolated from famous Italian regions (Barolo and Brunello-Montalcino) to promote complexity of flavor, aroma and proper color. After a typical 92 F fermentation temperature spike, wines were pressed at the end of a 10-day primary fermentation. Acid reduction was executed to balance the wine. The newly pressed wines were settled for 24 hours, and inoculated for secondary Malo Lactic fermentation. Wines were then drained to barrels and cellared for 11 months in a selection 93% new French oak. The finished wine was racked once, and bottled unfined and unfiltered.

At the Table

This wine was intense enough to stand up to more new oak than we ordinarily favor. The resulting deep aromas of leather, cut plum and crushed blackberry combine with hints of toasty marshmallow, taking on roasted meaty aromas with air. An onslaught of fruit and oak supported by acidity wash the palate and finish with fine grained ripe tannins. We highly recommend aging for 5 or more years, after which this sturdy go-getter will make a great pairing with roast beef and grilled onions.