



Raptor Ridge



2009 PINOT GRIS Willamette Valley

Released Feb 2010
1457 Cases Produced

90 Points
Wine & Spirits
October 2010

91 Points
Second Place
California Grapevine
Aug-Sept 2010

In the Vineyard

Our 2009 Willamette Valley Pinot Gris is comprised of grapes from Carabella Vineyard on Parrett Mountain in the Chehalem Mountains AVA, and Meredith Mitchell and Bellevue Cross Vineyards in the McMinnville AVA. The vintage provided ample heat units, rapidly accelerating ripening on younger, warmer vineyard sites, where it was a sprint to harvest before the sugar accumulation raced past us. Meanwhile, balance was provided by our older vineyards in McMinnville that benefitted from cooling evening winds blowing in through the Van Duzer Corridor. This maintained fresh acidity and slowed the ripening process. Two separate blocks of Carabella fruit were harvested a week apart in early October, comprising 50% of the blend. Amazing floral notes were derived from this vineyard, even though it produced ample sugars at over 25 brix. The remaining fruit was evenly divided between our McMinnville AVA fruit sources. Bellevue Cross and Meredith-Mitchell vineyards came in at a modest 23 to 24 brix respectively, balancing out the sugar levels. Each vineyard yielded beautiful clusters that showed no signs of mildew or rot. Beginning September 30, and spanning the first two weeks of October, blocks of fruit from each vineyard were hand-picked early in the cool mornings, transported fresh to our winery in quarter-ton harvest totes.

At the Winery

The clusters were hand sorted and inspected for ripeness and quality, then elevated into our membrane press, whole-cluster. Pressing whole-cluster gently extracts the purest juice from the grape with minimal skin contact, avoiding bitterness and astringency. Each vineyard block was pressed and settled for 24 hours in separate cooling tanks to further remove pulp and unwanted solids and to determine the resulting chemistry of each fruit source in designing the overall blend. That blend of more than 24 tons of 100% Pinot gris was assembled into our 4000-gallon chilled fermenting tank and allowed to warm up to 60°F for two days. Native yeast fermentation ensued on day five, and to promote a clean and complete fermentation, CY3079 yeast cultures and nutrients were also added to the tank. Chilled on day 5 to 52°F to slow the fermentation, the wine maintained fresh aromas and this technique halted fermentation prior to Malo-lactic. Only yeast-based primary fermentation was desired and at these cooler temperatures the wine required over 3 months of slow, cold fermentation to finish off dry with 0.5% residual sugar, a pH of 3.4, and alcohol of 14.0% by volume. The finished wine was sterile-filtered to 0.2 microns with cross-flow filtration, after first being fined with casein milk protein and bentonite, then cold-stabilized for two weeks.

At the Table

The wine is brilliant with a pale hint of color and pleasing white flower aromas mingled with pear and citrus notes that waft from the glass. Silky in texture with moderate palate weight and a pleasing minerality, our 2009 Pinot gris tastes of Bartlett pear mingled with a touch of Meyer lemon. A modest 0.5% residual sugar uplifts the fruit and balances nicely with the natural acidity maintained by the cool fermentation. Pair with cedar plank roasted salmon, shellfish in garlic butter, or just enjoy this delightfully polished wine as a cocktail alternative on a sunny summer patio at the end of a long day.