

# Eyrie: In the Cellar



Jason Lett Works minimally in the cellar to create wines that translate the beauty of own-rooted vines and the terroir of the vineyards.

Here you can see how he doesn't paint over the cracks in the wall, leaving colonies of bacteria/yeast native to this specific winery to do their thing and make the wines more unique. They have their own natural malo culture floating around in the winery, no need to inoculate here!

- Grapes are trucked in from the winery a few miles away and care is taken to avoid damage to the berries.
- Minimal racking, extended lees contact, complete and spontaneous malolactic fermentation help create wines with great length and mouthfeel.
- No fining, minimal filtration
- Old barrels, very little new oak. Newest barrel is from 2009.

## Single-Vineyard “Original Vines Reserve” Wines

All grapes for the Pinot noir Reserve and Chardonnay Reserve come from Eyrie's original planting, the oldest in the Willamette Valley. These 40-year-old vines are grown on their own roots, and reflect the complexity of their age and their long-established “sense of place.” This is translated into stylish wines showing finesse, subtlety, and depth of character.

**Pinot noir Reserve:** Fermented in small bins from completely de-stemmed and mostly whole berries. The ‘must’ is punched down by hand every four hours. After a gentle pressing, the wine is transferred to oak casks. During nearly two years in barrel, the wine falls naturally clear, and is bottled without filtration or fining.

**Chardonnay Reserve:** Essentially a vineyard/barrel selection. Over the years, certain parts of the original “Draper Selection” Chardonnay plantings consistently have yielded wines with deeper, richer, more complex flavors. These wines are aged for nine months or more on unstirred lees, in a combination of neutral and new French and Oregon oak casks. It receives only one gentle filtration prior to bottling.

## “Estate” Wines

The grapes for Eyrie's Estate wines come mostly from the three “younger” vineyards: Stonehedge, Sisters, and Rolling Green Farm, planted in the 1980's. Each of these vineyards has its own individuality, but they believe the ultimate blends represent a whole better than its parts.

**Pinot noir:** Less “reserved” than Reserve wines, Eyrie's estate Pinot noirs typically display forward, fruity and fresh varietal characteristics. Aged 11 months in mostly neutral oak casks, the wine is not fined, and is filtered only if necessary.

**Pinot gris:** This blend of grapes from all four vineyards shows rich varietal character and complexity rarely found in Pinot gris. Fermented in stainless steel tanks, the wine gains added dimensions from remaining on the lees until bottling. It is given only one loose filtration prior to bottling. The first Pinot gris was produced in 1970, a full ten years before other grape-growers recognized its New World potential.

**Chardonnay:** In 1964, before leaving for Oregon, David Lett hand-selected a remarkable collection of vine cuttings from the Draper Ranch in northern California. The clonal diversity of this collection, originally imported from Burgundy, and the cool Burgundian climate of the Willamette Valley combine to produce Eyrie's unique and distinctly European-styled Chardonnay. Aged on the lees for eleven months in neutral oak, and given one loose filtration before bottling, the wines are subtly expressive, elegant, and long-lived. (Adapted from Eyrie website.)

# EYRIE VINEYARDS

## Eyrie Vineyard

- David Lett's original vineyard on 20 acres of south-facing slope (of which 6.5 are Pinot) in what is now Dundee Hills AVA
- Soil is Iron rich Jory with a narrow band of Woodburn clay loam on lower slope (about 220'-280'). Jory is red to the eye while Woodburn browner.
- First vines planted in Dundee Hills in 1966, in combo of East-West and North-South rows between about 220' and 400' - loosely spaced 6' by 10' and farmed w/out herbicides, pesticides, or fungicides. Lower slopes spaced out to 12'. As soils become less vigorous they bring the rows closer together.
- Varcitals under vine: Pinot noir, Chardonnay, Pinot gris, Pinot Meunier, and Muscat Ottonel.
- Plantings a combo of 70% own-rooted UCD 1A (Wädenswil) and UCD 5 (Pommard), purchased from increase blocks\* in CA, and 30% own-rooted UCD 18.
- First 4 acres were planted incrementally in 1966, 1967, and 1968; an additional 2.5 acres in 1970.
- 'South Block' section (approx nine tenths of an acre) - all UCD 1A - responsible for Eyrie's best and most ageworthy Pinots.

## Daphne Vineyard (Originally named Stonehedge)

- Planted in 1979 and 1980, just uphill from Eyrie at about 720' to 800'.
- 13 acres of Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir (also UCD 1A/2A and 5), and Pinot Meunier in a checkerboard of row orientations; partly 1m by 1.5m and the rest 6' by 10'.
- More rocky Jory soil.

## Rolling Green Farm

- 4.9 acres of Pinot Noir, 1 acre of Pinot Gris, planted to 10' by 4' in North-South rows at elevation of about 600'.
- Clonal material is half UCD 2A and other half UCD 5.

## Three Sisters Vineyard

- Three Pinot Noir sisters: Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, and Pinot Blanc.
- 16 acres, 4.2 of which planted to Pinot Noir (UCD2A and 5).
- Planted at a lower elevation of 200'-360'.
- Vine spacing 10' by 4'.

Grapes from all four vineyards are blended to produce Eyrie's Estate wines.

In a good year yields of all four vineyards amount to just over 2 tons per acre. Until two youngest of the four Eyrie Vineyards got up and running in 1991 Eyrie also purchased pinot noir from Cameron's Abbey Ridge Vineyard, first planted in 1976.

Neighboring Vineyard named Outcrop recently purchased. Fruit yet to be used by Eyrie.

\* 'Increase block' is a phrase used for an expanded planting of foundation stock that has been propagated by nursery in the California Grapevine Registration & Certification Program.

