



2022 Durant Vineyard, Madrone Block Pinot Noir

AVA: Dundee Hills

LOCATION: Breyman Orchard Rd.

SOIL TYPE: Jory

YEAR PLANTED: 2000

CLONAL MATERIAL: Dijon 115

VINEYARD SIZE: 55-acre vineyard; 3.1-acre block

PICKING DATES: October 10th

TONS/ACRE: 1.85

OWNERS: The Durant Family

PRODUCTION: 325 cases bottled

Site History: Durant Vineyard is, by any measure, one of the pioneer vineyards in Oregon. The site was established and first planted in 1973 by Ken and Penny Durant who, along with their son Paul, owns and farms it to this day. Set on Breyman Orchards Rd. at the southern end of the Dundee Hills, the vineyard is about 60 acres in size with a wide range of elevation topping out at about 600 feet and has multiple different plantings of Pinot Noir and other varieties. This is a mostly south-facing site that is adjacent to Domaine Drouhin, De Ponte and Sokol Blosser. To give some perspective on how fertile and life-sustaining the soil is in the Dundee Hills there is also a successful olive orchard planted on the property from which the Durants make damn good olive oil. We get two sections of fruit from the vineyard. The Bishop Block which was planted to Pommard in 1973 and the Madrone Block which is a 2000 planting of Dijon 115 clone.

Site Characteristics: This block is on a long, gently sloping stretch of hill that faces due south overlooking southern Yamhill County. The rows run opposite the normal north-south which is, especially in this day and age, not necessarily a bad thing. Dijon 115 is known for its early ripening and deeply concentrated fruit character and the Dundee Hills soil and warm growing conditions can enhance these attributes to shocking extents. This section of the vineyard is fortunate to be bounded on one side by trees which provide both shade and a cooling effect. This old vineyard is the home to the Durants and is a significant historic Oregon site. While this block took 30 years to be planted the journey from laying fallow for years to the type of wines it is capable of putting out now assuredly was worth the wait.

The Block: The Madrone Block is so named because when Ken and Penny were looking for property to purchase for the purpose of planting grapes, they were told that one of the things to look for as a plant indicator were Madrone trees. While other blocks were planted before this one the name for the block was withheld until the 2000 planting along a stretch of hillside dotted with Madrones was planted to Dijon 115. Patricia Green Cellars began receiving fruit in 2012 from this block when the adjacent Bishop Block was severely damaged by a spring hailstorm. While we had been bottling the Bishop Block, we had only done so under the moniker "Durant Vineyard." Not wanting to conflate the two we used the specific block to identify this bottling in 2012 and then moved to bottling the Bishop Block and Madrone Block as separate bottlings each vintage since 2013.

Farming Practices: This vineyard, no doubt, encapsulates a lot about the Oregon farming experience. Assuredly in the 1970s the Durants farmed the way most places on the planet did and it is probably not something anyone wants to think deeply about at this point. However, over time and with prodding from any number of their winery customers (we included) the Durants have moved toward organic farming and even incorporated productive livestock like sheep and goats to keep weeds at bay. Over the years since we began with this family's vineyard (2010) we have seen a marked change in the farming and the resulting health of the plants and soil.

Picking Dates, Tonnages, Tons/Acre: The entirety of our fruit from the blocks was picked on October 10th. This is nearly 1 month after we picked the fruit in 2021 (September 13th) and 2023 (September 14th and 15th) due to the frost in April that set back the life cycle on plants and reduced or all but eliminated the primary buds on some plants. The overall tonnage from the block was 5.75 tons or 1.83 tons/acre, however the divide between the top portion of the block and the lower portion was significant.

Vinification: Two fermenters were done 100% destemmed and 2 fermenters were done 100% whole cluster.

Winemaking: Fermentations were managed exclusively by pigeages to ensure gentle handling, extraction, and delicate tannin construction. Cold soaks were generally 4 days across all four fermenters. Full fermentation from beginning to pressing was 16 days for the destemmed fruit and 18 days for the 100% whole cluster fruit. A 48-hour settling of pressed wine occurred prior to being racked to barrel. All wines were on full lees until assemblage for bottling. Bottled without fining or filtration.

Barrels: This 13-barrel bottling consists of only 1 new barrel (8%), 4 one-year barrels (31%) and a large selection of neutral barrels (63%). Wine was in barrel until late June and bottled in late July allowing for around 9 months in barrel. The 100% whole cluster fermentations contribute 5 of the barrels (40%) and the destemmed the remaining 60%.

Notes: The Madrone Block from Durant Vineyard had been somewhat of a crowd-pleaser sort of wine in its youth, but those days are in the past by 3-4 vintages at this point. The vines have aged into maturity, the quality of the farming is far greater than it was a decade ago and we have figured out ways to coax out the more subtle qualities in the grapes while still leaving a bit of the more hedonistic side of things for a wine that is deep, rich, satisfying but not off-kilter in any way. The inclusion of 100% whole cluster fermentation to half of the wine allows for more substance and some appropriate tannin structure that gives the wine the sort of definition its intensity of fruit demands. The Dundee Hills had a banner year, quality-wise at the least in 2022, and this wine really shows how an unusual vintage can also be a great vintage at the same time. This wine brings to the table a wealth of red and black fruit, an amazingly deep texture but a greater sense of underlying tannin that pulls the largesse of this wine into great balance. This is a delicious wine in the here and now but promises for development in the future.

The wine finished with numbers of a TA of 5.3, a pH of 3.54, a free sulfur level below 30 ppm and a total sulfur below 75 ppm.