



2003 BENTON-LANE ESTATE PINOT NOIR

Grape Source:	100% Benton-Lane Estate Vineyard, Willamette Valley
Sugar at Harvest:	24.0 ° Brix
Harvest Dates:	09/22/03 – 10/03/03
Total Acidity:	5.9 g/L
pH:	3.65
Alcohol:	13.6% by volume
Production:	17,209 cases
Winemaker:	Damian North

Growing Season: 2003 began as a normal growing season. Bud break was right on time in late April, and the spring rains cleared up by mid-May allowing for ideal bloom conditions in June. During the summer and early fall the Willamette Valley experienced record hot temperatures and dry conditions. The crucial last weeks of ripening were hot, and rapid ripening resulted in a very early and quick harvest. Despite the heat, the fruit was in excellent condition, a testament to excellent vineyard management. Average yield was 2.25 tons per acre.

Vinification: Fermentation took place in both small 1.25-ton open fermenters and large stainless steel tanks. Fermentations in the open fermentors were “punched-down” by hand in the traditional manner to extract color and flavor from the skins, while a technique called “pneumatage” was utilized to extract color and flavor in the larger stainless steel tanks. This technique involves injecting large bubbles of air into the tank, which rise through the fermenting wine and gently break up the thick cap of skins that forms on top of the fermentor. This technique allows excellent extraction of color and flavor from the skins while minimizing extraction of bitter seed tannins. The wine was aged in French oak barrels for 10 months, and bottled in September 2004.

The Wine: The hot growing season resulted in a “big” Pinot Noir with a dark ruby color, and aromas of ripe black plums, dark berries, currants, and cassis framed by sweet and spicy oak notes. The concentrated ripe berry fruit mid-palate is balanced by lively acidity. This wine shows the firm backbone formed by ripe tannins that will provide the structure needed for graceful aging. The finish is long and succulent.

Suggested Retail: \$20