



The Vineyard

From the standpoint of its layout, the Bishop Creek vineyard is a little quirky. But the fruit it grows is something really special. Bishop Creek has its own unique signature – it’s dark in color and has healthy tannins, but it’s never “monolithic.” The best wines from the vineyard have layers of flavor, with darker fruit tones and spice elements often complementing each other.

So what makes Bishop Creek so good?

Microsites:

Bishop Creek Farms is about 60 acres total. However, only 13 acres are planted to grapes, while the rest function as pasture and wildlife habitat. Within these 13 acres, there are 7 distinctive microsites, each with their own soil and aspect. 15 separate planting blocks have been tailored to take advantage of each microsite.



Block Code	Variety	Net Acres	Year Planted	Plants Per Acre	Grower Comments
A	Pinot noir	1.45	1988	1742	Richly flavored
B	Pinot noir	4.18	1988	1742	Fresh, multilayered palate
C	Pinot noir	0.74	2002	1815	-Newly planted-
D	Pinot noir	1.39	1990	1742	Intense flavors and low yields
E	Pinot gris	0.17	1995	1815	Zippy acidity
F	Pinot noir	0.81	1988	1275	Fruity, well balanced
G	Pinot blanc	0.25	2002	1815	-Newly planted-
H	Pinot noir	0.79	2002	1815	First crop 2008
I	Pinot noir	0.14	1998	1815	Young, early ripeness
J	Pinot gris	0.06	1995	1815	Good balance
K	Pinot gris	0.24	1995	1815	Small clusters
L	Pinot noir	0.28	2000	1815	Young, early ripeness
M	Pinot gris	0.90	1998	1815	Mature, balanced
N	Pinot gris	0.63	2000/1	1815	Earlier ripening
P	Syrah	0.66	Nov 2007		-Newly planted-
P	Gruner Veltliner	0.23	Nov 2007		-Newly planted-
P	Arneis	0.10	Apr 2008		-Newly planted-

Varieties:

Varieties of grapes grown here include Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, and small amounts of Pinot Blanc, Gruner Veltliner, Syrah and Arneis.

Area:

Bishop Creek is in the Yamhill-Carlton District American Viticultural Area. Wines from this area feature dark color and concentrated color tones. Other noted vineyards in the YC District include Willakenzie Estate, Shea, McCrone, Wahle, Resonance, and Deux Verts vineyards.

Soil:

Bishop Creek is on the Willakenzie soil series. Formed in the Eocene era, these soils are derived from marine sediments and ocean floor volcanic basalt. The sedimentary soils of the Yamhill-Carlton District viticultural area are millions of years older than the soils in the surrounding areas.



Climate:

Bishop Creek sits on an isolated, south facing spur jutting out from the foothills of the Coast range. Sheltered by the mountains behind it, Bishop Creek has a cooler, drier microclimate than other vineyards in the area. The result is delayed ripening, more intense flavors, and better retention of natural acidity.

Roots:

Much of the mature Pinot noir is planted "on its own roots," not grafted onto phylloxera resistant rootstock. While this leaves the vineyard susceptible to phylloxera, it also means that our Pinot noir fruit is growing on Pinot noir roots. Almost all vineyards in the rest of the world (and an increasing proportion of Oregon vineyards) use grafted stock. This creates a mediating influence of rootstock on the final wine – an influence which Bishop Creek is largely free of. With own-rooted vines, you get the expression of the Pinot noir plant from root tip to shoot tip.

Sustainability:

Bishop Creek has received Certified Sustainable accreditation from LIVE (Low Input Viticulture and Enology) and is Salmon Safe. We use no herbicides or insecticides in the vineyard, and our approach to fruit health depends more on careful cultivation practices than on spraying. When we do spray, we use organically-approved mixtures of natural minerals. We time our soil tillage regime carefully to eliminate erosion and have created wide buffer zones around nearby streams and wetlands.

High Density:

Bishop Creek has one of the highest density plantings of own-rooted vines in Oregon. This means that each vine can devote more resources to a smaller amount of fruit. The result is increased structure and concentration in the final wine. The Oregon standard is around 1250 to 1350 vines per acre, but at Bishop Creek we have 1742 vines per acre in the self-rooted Pinot noir, and 1815 vines per acre in the younger plantings.

Low Yields:

Bishop Creek Cellars Pinot noir is cropped at only 1 to 1 1/3 clusters per shoot. Clusters at Bishop Creek tend to be small-berried and compact, so most plants carry no more than 45 ounces of fruit at harvest. Some blocks crop naturally lower, carrying little more than 28 ounces of fruit per plant.

Non Irrigated:

All Bishop Creek vines are unirrigated. That means that the roots must go deep to find permanent sources of water. This not only conserves water and saves energy, it means higher quality in the final wine. Deep roots also leave the fruit more drought resistant and resistant to splitting in rainy harvest weather.

