

## Harvest Report 2007

As the 2007 harvest crawls slowly to bed, I sit in my family room exhausted, but with a smile on my face, satisfaction in my heart and of course a glass of Pinot within easy reach. We brought in over 75 tons of excellent quality fruit this vintage, operating entirely within our own facility for the first time. The “crush” was both crazy and satisfying. Any time you use new space to make wine, there is a process as you learn how to use the building with efficiency and flow. By the time all the wine was bubbling in fermenters or resting in barrels our crew of staff, friends and volunteers collectively celebrated something truly special— our first vintage in our own winery!

The harvest provided challenges with rapidly changing weather. We watched the forecasts closely in terms of rains and long-range patterns. It's not unusual to endure brief rain in the end run to an Oregon harvest. In fact, last year, 2006, was the only vintage in recent memory that the harvest completed prior to October's showers.

In the 2007 vintage, the rain really didn't cause the greatest concern, rather it was the sudden departure of heat. Some vineyards carrying heavy loads of fruit needed a little more warm weather to reach optimum ripeness. Fortunately, our estate vineyards with their exceptionally low yields were in good position for harvest as the weather declined.

We made the decision on October 6th that a harvest window was reached, and then scrambled to pull in as much fruit as we could in the next four days. Picking crews were assembled and Lucy (our 8-ton 1967 vintage truck) rumbled into action! Looking back, the call to arms was well timed. Our fruit quality is excellent and we expect 2007 to be viewed as an outstanding, as well as historic, vintage for Phelps Creek.

In addition to learning the ways of a new facility, a talented and exciting team of winemakers collaborated together for the first time. Rich Cushman, with twenty-four Oregon vintages under his belt, heads our winemaking operation. Rich was raised in Hood River and after graduating from OSU and then UC Davis, made wines in the Willamette Valley, historic center of the Oregon industry. However, times are a-changing! Wineries and vineyards sprout everywhere in the Columbia Gorge. Rich and his wife Robin moved their empty nest back to Hood River just in time for our 2007 crush.

Joining Rich is Alexandrine Roy, a fourth generation French winemaker. Alexandrine controls winemaking at her family's Burgundian estate Domaine Marc Roy, situated in the legendary wine village Gevrey-Chambertin. After a vineyard tour and lunch at Phelps Creek in July, prior to McMinnville's International Pinot Noir Celebration, I asked her to join us. Perhaps it was my seductive charms, or maybe Heather's outstanding lunch paired with

nine wines on a picture perfect summer afternoon—the end result is a very special relationship with our winery. Alexandrine is creating a special cuvée of Pinot Noir from our estate fruit using traditional Burgundian techniques including punching down the cap “by foot.” In 2008 we look forward to the release of 2007 Alexandrine’s Cuvée alongside Rich’s 2007 Judith’s Reserve Pinot Noir.

**-Bob**