



## HUNTING THE GREAT WHITE

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Pinot noir is easily the singular red wine focus in this great cool climate, but white wines are a source of equal passion for many Oregon winemakers. In this workshop, we will investigate the bright, fresh fruit of these complex and imminently ageable white varieties that have captivated many of us. More and more these wines will define our region as it evolves to be as well-known for white as red.

During our investigation we will discuss varieties, clones, and the grapegrowing and winemaking decisions that help us take advantage of our climate. A tasting of varied vintages of Pinot gris, Chardonnay, and Riesling will illustrate these decisions.

### **Points to Investigate:**

- History of white grape varieties in Oregon and where these varieties are now planted, with an emphasis on their compatibility with the cool climate of Oregon
- The growing conditions, climates, and soils for white varieties in the Willamette Valley and Southern Oregon
- How white wines differ from red
- Development of a uniquely Oregon style
- Oregon's most planted white: Pinot gris
- A Chardonnay renaissance in Oregon
- A Riesling revival
- Other white varieties
- White wines can age

### **Moderators:**

Michael Davies, REX HILL

Anthony King, Lemelson Vineyards

### **Panelists:**

Ben Casteel, Bethel Heights Vineyard

James Frey, Trisaetum

Luisa Ponzi, Ponzi Vineyards

Erik Kramer, Domaine Serene

Jason Lett, The Eyrie Vineyards

Wynne Peterson-Nedry, Chehalem

## **History of White Grape Varieties in Oregon**

Early winegrowing in Oregon always involved white wines. Although retired French-Canadian fur trappers planted the first grapes in the 1840s, many settlers in the second half of the nineteenth century had German heritage, and German white varieties, particularly Riesling, were favored. One of the early growers was Adolph Reuter with grapes on David Hill outside Forest Grove. His wines received acclaim when his Clevner (a German name for Pinot, though the wine was probably Pinot blanc) won a silver medal at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. Reuter claimed that the region would become the Rhineland of America.

In southern Oregon, there was more influence from California. Peter Britt came to Jacksonville from Switzerland in 1862. He brought grape cuttings from California and produced Claret, Muscat, and Zinfandel wines. The Von Pessl brothers added Riesling and Sauvignon. Adam Doerner got Riesling and Sauvignon cuttings from the Beringer brothers and planted them near Roseburg in the 1890s. And it was near Roseburg that the rebirth of Oregon wines took place in 1961, when Richard Sommer planted Riesling at Hillcrest Vineyard.

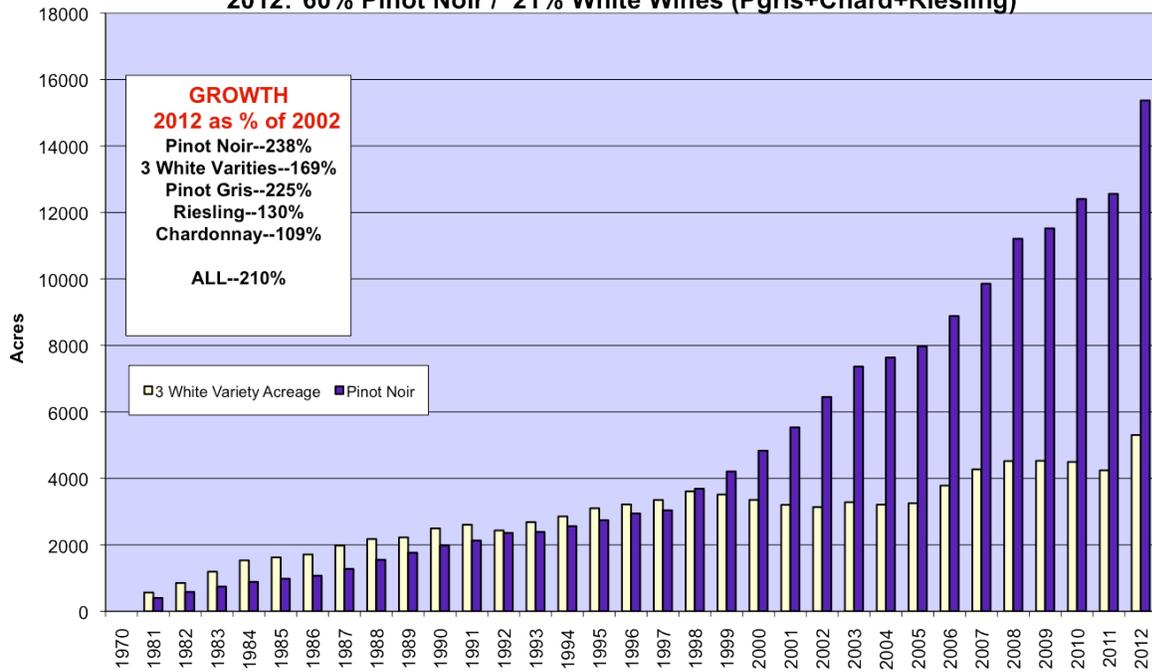
The plantings in the 1960s and 1970s focused on Pinot noir, Riesling, and Chardonnay; however, Riesling was gradually eclipsed by Chardonnay in the mid-1980s. By 1986, Chardonnay accounted for 23% of Oregon's acreage, Riesling 19%, and Pinot gris 3%. Oregon growers were pulling out Pinot noir to plant Chardonnay and Müller-Thurgau. Pinot noir acreage remained relatively flat until 1996. By 1994, Pinot gris had become more widely planted than Riesling, and in 2001 Pinot gris replaced Chardonnay as the most planted white grape variety in Oregon.

Today, here's the way things stand (numbers from 2012): Pinot gris, Oregon's leading white grape, makes up 13.5% of Oregon's 25,448 acres of grapes and 14.8% of our 50,186 tons of wine produced. Chardonnay is next with 4.6% of the acreage and 5.2% of the wine produced. The third white position goes to Riesling, now 2.8% of planted acres and 3.6% of production. Pinot blanc is next in line with 1.1% of total acreage. Other whites include Viognier, Gewürztraminer, Müller-Thurgau, Albariño, Grüner Veltliner, and Sauvignon Blanc. The three top white wines have increased approximately 35% over the last decade. This is pretty impressive, until you see that Pinot noir plantings have grown around 150% over the same time period.

# Oregon Winegrape Acreage by Key Variety

Source: Oregon Agricultural Statistics Service and So. Oregon University Research Ctr

2012: 60% Pinot Noir / 21% White Wines (Pgris+Chard+Riesling)



## The Growing Conditions, Climates, and Soils in the Willamette Valley

### Climate

There are four critical aspects to the Willamette Valley growing season:

1. Moderate temperatures
2. Dry growing season
3. Day length
4. Sunlight intensity

Our winters are very mild (mean January temperature of 42°F), and our summers are reasonably cool with July's average temperature being 68°F. Generally, there is just enough heat and sunlight intensity to fully ripen cool-climate grape varieties at the end of the growing season. The Willamette Valley has a very dry summer growing season. Although the average annual rainfall is 40", most of it falls in the winter. Average rainfall in January is 7", but only 0.5" in July and August. This is in stark contrast to Burgundy, where rainfall is more evenly distributed throughout the year at about 3" per month. This means that we have no downy mildew and few problems with botrytis in the Willamette Valley, but we have a greater incidence of drought-related issues.

The 45th parallel cuts through the Willamette Valley just north of Salem. Being that far north, between March 21 and September 21, we have more daylight hours than growing regions further south. On June 22 we have 1.5 hours more daylight than in Napa; this is a key difference between cool- and warm-climate whites. Conversely, day length shortens rapidly in the fall, registering strong hormonal signals of the growing season's end to the vines.

Small improvements in our viticulture lend themselves to big quality differences in a cool, maritime climate like that of Oregon.

### Soils and Geology

Oregon was created by the collision of the Pacific Plate with the North American Plate almost 200 million years ago. The Willamette Valley, and the Coast Range that protects it from the ocean, were created by uplift caused by that collision. The Willamette Valley is 150 miles long and up to 60 miles wide. It is an old volcanic and sedimentary seabed that has been overlaid with gravel and silt from Montana and Washington. During the final period of the last ice age, hundreds of floods occurred when an ice dam holding back massive lake waters near present day Clark Fork River gave way. Flood debris filled the Willamette Valley to depths of 400' as many cubic miles of water washed down the Columbia River Basin and into the Willamette Valley. (Read *Cataclysms on the Columbia* by John Logan Allen and Marjorie Burns for more insight on some truly dramatic geology.)

Early plantings focused on the deep red, basaltic-origin clay-loam soils, such as Jory, Saum, or Nekia that overlay a basalt volcanic rock base. Recently, interest has developed in planting on the shallower silty clay-loams, such as Willakenzie and Peavine that overlay sedimentary rock, and in the wind-blown Loess soils of the flood era in the hills of the northern Willamette Valley.

### **The Growing Conditions, Climates, and Soils in Southern Oregon**

The motto of Southern Oregon is that it is a “world of wine.” Nearly all temperate-climate grape varieties can be successfully grown somewhere in the Umpqua, Rogue, and Applegate appellations. This is a diverse winegrowing region with a range of soils, aspects and climatic conditions.

Historically, to differentiate the region from the Willamette Valley, the tendency has been to emphasize the more arid areas where Bordeaux and Rhone varieties excel. However, Southern Oregon vineyards feature a very wide range of soils (from sandy loam to clay), precipitation (from 12"–60" per year), elevations (600'–2800'), and heat units (2,100–3,100).

The warmest areas, the Bear Creek and Applegate Valleys, are predominately planted to Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay, and Syrah, while the “cooler” areas, the Illinois and Umpqua Valleys, grow Pinot noir, Pinot gris, Gewürztraminer, Tempranillo, Riesling, and Chardonnay.

### **The Growing Conditions, Climates, and Soils of the Columbia River Gorge AVA**

The Columbia Gorge AVA is a two-state appellation stretching from Hood River, Oregon across the river through Underwood and Lyle, WA, and back across the river to The Dalles, Oregon. Grapes are grown from 200' to 1,825' elevation. Rainfall drops dramatically; traveling east along the 120 mile long Gorge, within 25 miles 31" precipitation at Hood River drops to 15" at The Dalles. Soils are dependent upon elevation, a result of Missoula Floods of 20,000 to 12,000 years ago, with a rough dividing line at 1,000' - above which the soils are volcanic in origin and below are glacial and Missoula Floods deposits. This region is proving an exciting place to grow cool-climate varieties (Pinot noir/gris, Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer, Riesling, and Grüner Veltliner) in western end, and warm climate varieties (Merlot, Syrah, and Zinfandel) in eastern portions around The Dalles. The Columbia River Gorge has an important and unique influence on both the Willamette Valley and Columbia Basin climates, as it is the only sea level passage through the Cascade Mountain Range.

### **How White Wines Differ from Red**

White wine grapes grow side-by-side with Pinot noir, receive the same handwork and attention to grapegrowing detail, and are harvested over the same period. They all have clear juice—Pinot noir too, unlike some other red varieties—and are known for bright fruit character and food-friendly acidity.

Differences rest in red wines being fermented on their skins and seeds to extract color, fruit tannins for more structure, and slightly different aromas and flavors. Typically, white wines are pressed away from their skins and stems immediately and fermentation is slow and cool, compared to a warmer and actively worked mass of pulp, skin, seeds, and sometimes stems in Pinot noir. All reds and some whites age in barrel. Time in barrel, lees contact, and malolactic fermentation are all employed in red and often white wine vinification.

Although there are similarities, the makeup of white wine is different by being generally higher in acid, lower in pH, less alcoholic and ripe, and may or may not be influenced by malolactic. To achieve perfect balance, a minor amount of natural residual sugar is sometimes left in white wines. As often as not, white wines are allowed to ferment to total dryness, just like Pinot noir. Textural enhancement also helps balance. Wine color is mainly dependent on skins and barrel.

Pinot noir pulls color and structure during maceration and fermentation, which is fixed with the help of barrel tannins. White wines in barrel pull some golden color from the barrel and from oxidation over time in bottle, where the color deepens, especially under cork.

### **The Styles of White Wines in Oregon**

As viticulture and winemaking have improved in Oregon, a sense for better definition of balanced ripeness has evolved to reflect Oregon's unique ability to offer both the New World's vibrant fruit characteristics and the Old World's mineral structure and complexity.

White wines from the same variety, even from the same vineyard, can be produced in a range of styles. Winemakers are quick to say that their wines are "made in the vineyard", and ideally all white wines will reflect the vineyard and the region where they are produced. However, techniques employed by the winemakers have an important effect as well. To help understand the winemakers' influence on style, we can divide wine styles into two basic categories: those that emphasize fruit and those that emphasize texture. These styles can be applied to any white grape variety in any winegrowing region. Looking at Pinot gris in Alsace and Friuli for example, we see the fruit-emphasizing style of Pinot gris coming from Trimbach in Alsace and from Livio Felluga in Friuli. Contrast those wines with the texture-emphasizing style produced by André Ostertag in Alsace and Jermann in Friuli.

### **Fruit Emphasis**

Most non-Chardonnay white wines in Europe and the New World are produced by fermenting ripe grape juice in stainless steel or large, neutral oak ovals. The intent is to capture as much of the primary fruit character as possible while (ideally) allowing the nuances of the vineyard site to be clearly reflected in the finished wines. Frequently, the juice is also fermented at low temperatures and malolactic fermentation is often limited. These wines have intense aromatics and purity of fruit. In many cases, a measure of residual sugar will be left to soften the impression of acidity and richly fill the mid-palate. Wines that emphasize fruit have aromatics that recall the flavors of bright, fresh fruit. Descriptors for these wines are usually fruit-oriented—citrus, pear, melon, peach, kiwi, etc.

Stylistic differences in fruit-emphasized wines arise from vineyard site, ripeness at harvest, selection of yeast strains, length of fermentation, and the levels of residual sugar and malic acid that are retained in the final wine. Wines with a fruit emphasis are often aged on lees for less time than those that emphasize texture, going to bottle typically about six months after harvest.

### **Texture Emphasis**

Texture and aging impart important characteristics for traditionally vinified Chardonnay, but other varieties can follow this path as well. As with the fruit-emphasizing style, fermentation strains (whether indigenous or selected), malolactic fermentation (either total or partial), the degree of lees contact, skin contact before pressing, vessel decisions (barrel, stainless or both), and length of aging (usually 6 to 11 months) all help determine the expression of the final wine. Winemakers define their style by employing all of these parameters to a greater or lesser degree. For example, wines that have undergone ML have greater mouth feel, are more textural, and have softer acidity. They also have a less overt fruity character and more secondary flavors. Barrel fermentation adds richness and body in the mid-palate and more lees contact contributes non-fruit flavors. By employing processes that emphasize texture, resultant wines can have more evolved aromatics accompanied by suppleness and body on the palate.

### **Oregon's Most Important White**

While Josh Jensen and the ghost of Dick Graff might debate the statement, “Oregon is the home of New World Pinot noir,” no one can deny that Oregon was the first place in the New World to produce Pinot gris wine. While the variety was in the grape collection at UC Davis in the 1960s, no one had planted it commercially until David Lett did so in the Dundee Hills at his Eyrie Vineyard in 1966. The first wine to carry the Pinot gris label in the New World appeared with the Eyrie’s 1970 vintage. Ponzi Vineyards released their first “gris” in 1978, followed by Adelsheim Vineyard in 1984. Lett, Ponzi, and Adelsheim traveled together to promote Oregon Pinot gris around the country in the 1980s and early 1990s, introducing people both to a new variety and a “new” growing region (starting with a quick geography lesson: “Oregon: second down on the left”).

Over the 1990s, Pinot gris acreage overtook that of any other white variety. The most significant increase in Oregon Pinot gris production came when King Estate made the variety a significant part of their portfolio. In 1991, Ed King III and his family started planting extensive acreage to Pinot gris and buying grapes from existing plantings. Grape prices jumped and more growers got into the act. Pinot gris acreage in Oregon continues to grow, increasing 88% in the last 10 years. Additionally, King Estate devoted significant marketing dollars to the variety. An early tool was a Pinot gris cookbook with recipes from many of America’s top chefs.

Since 2003, as Pinot gris/grigio became the second most-purchased white wine in America, Oregon has become the growing region most associated with fine wines from this variety.

### **The Chardonnay Renaissance in Oregon**

As noted earlier, the once dominant white grape in Oregon, Chardonnay, was eclipsed by Pinot gris in the early 2000s. However, Oregon Chardonnay plantings are once again on the rise as the state’s Chardonnay offerings gather recognition and acclaim.

By pioneering Pinot gris and Pinot noir in the United States, Oregon had the great fortune of being able to set the national standard. However, an American Chardonnay style was well in place by the time Oregon wines started to gain visibility on the national stage in the 1980s. The established American style was based on warm climate viticulture, and the ultra-ripe, soft flavors that resulted were often further augmented by new oak, residual sugar, and the more buttery strains of malolactic.

In contrast, Oregon’s cool-climate Chardonnays were often comparatively mineral and structured in their youth, requiring time to reveal themselves. Many vintners stayed the course to make Chardonnay with a distinctively Oregon character, and this approach has proven its worth; those wines have shown themselves to age magnificently.

However, others attempted to emulate the “established” American Chardonnay style, de-acidifying, aging in high percentages of new oak, and using fatter strains of malo. These approaches were not always harmonious with the essential mineral character of cool-climate viticulture.

A complicating factor in the Oregon Chardonnay story has been clone. The Willamette Valley’s founding clone was the Draper Selection brought by David Lett in 1965. Draper Selection traces directly to the “Old Wente” clones of Chardonnay imported from France in the early 1900s.

Many of the Willamette Valley's pre-1974 plantings of Chardonnay are Draper Selection.

In the mid 1970s, new, high-yielding selections of Chardonnay became available from California. UC Davis clones 4 and 5 together became known as Clone 108. Like the Draper selection, Clone 108 can make good wines if properly managed for yield. The natural inclination of 108 is to produce huge, late ripening clusters. In a warm climate like Napa's, this can lend needed acidity. In our climate, the acidity can be very much out-of-balance if yields are not vigilantly tended.

In 1984 and 1988, a series of Chardonnay clones were brought into Oregon from Burgundy. These clones had been selected in the 1960s by a branch of the French Ministry of Agriculture whose office was in Dijon, and have numbers like 76, 95, and 96. These "Dijon clones" bloom and ripen two to three weeks earlier than others, and have added more options to match plantings to soil, site, and winemaking style.

Today, the breadth of available Chardonnay selections has created new excitement amongst Oregon Chardonnay growers. Planted acreage is once more beginning to climb.

The combination of attentive vineyard practices and a greater availability of clones is fueling a renaissance of Chardonnay made from both older and newer plantings. Winemakers are experimenting with various coopers and stainless steel, wild and commercial yeasts, lees stirring, and extended barrel aging.

There are styles that emphasize fruit through cool fermentations, stainless steel fermentation and aging, and inhibited malolactic. Others vinify for texture through the use of barrel fermentation, malolactic fermentation, and lees aging (sometimes with lees stirring regimens). Some wineries enjoy success blending both styles together in the making of their Chardonnay. In either case, the goal has become to make wines that reflect their place.

To an American palate that has become fatigued with blousier versions of Chardonnay, Oregon offers many refreshing alternatives. Good Oregon Chardonnays have the same transparency as Pinot noir, and like Pinot noir have the ability to eloquently reflect site, place, and vintage. Our cool, marine climate was never suited to growing the pillowy style of Chardonnay. The expansion of a subset of American wine drinkers who appreciate more food friendly, mineral-structured wines has led more and more consumers to explore the Oregon style.

### **Riesling Revival**

Riesling is the third largest planted white in Oregon, recovering somewhat from a time 30 years ago when 23% of Oregon wine production was Riesling. Australian dry-styled and German Rieslings have regained wine cognoscente's respect worldwide. *Turns out that the predominant clone of Riesling first planted in Oregon is directly related to Geisenheim 110, today one of the most important clones in German Riesling quality revival!* It is fitting that this noble variety, with its long history in Oregon, is beginning to find its place as a serious wine. We have historically made examples of Riesling with residual sugar and even botrytised dessert wines; but an exciting trend now includes a range of dry and almost dry Rieslings that have classic body and structure with a discernible Oregon character.

## **Other White Varieties, Some in the Pinot Family ... Some Not**

In the 1960s and 1970s, when there was no surety about what grape varieties would succeed in Oregon, a range of white grapes was planted. These plantings included Gewürztraminer, Müller-Thurgau, and Muscat Ottonel in the cooler regions, and Sauvignon blanc, Viognier, and Semillon in the somewhat warmer regions of the state.

Another early white variety with which growers experimented was Pinot blanc. It was discovered, however, that those plantings were in fact Melon. The mistake was actually made at UC Davis where they had inadvertently gotten rid of all selections of Pinot blanc and misidentified Melon de Bourgogne (aka Muscadet) as Pinot blanc. In 1976, Oregon State University imported two clones of Pinot blanc from Colmar, along with a slew of other Alsatian clones. It took a while to get these clones through quarantine process, but by the mid-1980s, growers could plant Pinot blanc for first time. We slowly started to plant and to make wine. Cameron Winery made America's first true Pinot blanc in 1988 from a small test block of the new clones. Others soon followed.

Small plantings of a whole range of other white varieties can be found throughout the state. They include Albariño, Arneis, Auxerrois, Grüner Veltliner, Tocai Friulano, plus others that have not yet surfaced as wines. Those adventurous few who have chosen to plant these varieties face the same stylistic choices. Clearly, these producers have been inspired by wines they have tasted of these varieties from Europe. Their challenge will be to make the correct vineyard choices and then to find the winemaking approach that allows their project to be uniquely Oregonian.

## **White Wines Can Age**

*Ageability is the icing on the cake, especially since most bottles are consumed within days of purchase. Hasn't seemed to have held back Marlborough SB or Champagne that people drink them sooner rather than later. However, a reputation for making wines that stand the test of time enhances the image, at least among wine geeks willing to spend more.* Harvey Steiman, Wine Spectator

Ageability helps to define a wine region more than many other aspects. It seems to be the final recognition that validates a growing region as more than good, as possibly great enough to make wines that live from one generation to another. Not all wines ageable, but the age-worthy ones are remembered and can lift an entire region's reputation.

Red wines are known for aging. They accomplish this by balancing fruit and alcohol with structure largely from tannin and polyphenolics. White wines can age equivalently by substituting good acid levels as the structural element in this three-legged stool (in sweet wines the sugar adds a fourth leg to be balanced). In both cases, balance is the key and structure of some kind is required.

Most of us don't drink older wines a lot, but we *should* cellar enough to experience the added dimension given by aging. As with reds, aged whites have often lost primary fruit to more tertiary, bruised fruit or savory characters, and gain textural richness and length.

However, the beauty of age has seldom been seen by most wine consumers, who may dismiss a lost bottle in the cellar or random bottle bin at a retailer as being highly oxidized and bland.

Two things are required for optimum aging of white wines: wines grown to perfect balance in a climate where acid and flavors peak at the end of the season, and conditions to minimize premature oxidation. Growing classic varieties like Riesling and Chardonnay in the cool climate of the Willamette Valley and making wines under oxidative protections give us confidence our white wines will age exceptionally. Even under cork and with less winemaking experience, our Chardonnays, Rieslings, and Pinot gris from the mid 90s have shown beautifully in recent tastings in London, Tokyo, San Francisco, and New York.

We encourage the media and trade to recognize age-worthiness as an important measure of wine quality, to see in young wines the attributes needed for a wine to age, not just immediate drinkability, and to excite consumers about the attractiveness of elegant, aged wines so that they demand them from restaurants, retail shops, and wineries—and possibly return to the culture of cellars and wine collection.

### **Conclusion**

Oregon's cool climate is unique in North America, perhaps in the world. Oregon's white wine producers have moved from trying to imitate the white wines of Europe or California (and not having much success at either) to finding the confidence to produce wines that are the unique products of Oregon's climates and sites.

## MODERATORS

### Michael Davies

Born in New Zealand, Michael attended the University of Auckland and completed a Bachelor of Arts in Economics, Scandinavian Studies, and Political Science. Then, after a checkered employment history including selling steel products, managing a bungee-jumping business in the United Kingdom, and running a youth hostel, he found the world of wine. In 1997, he graduated from Lincoln University with a post-graduate diploma in Viticulture & Enology. Prior to joining the A to Z team in 2006 as Winemaker, he worked for 5 years at Chehalem, employed as the Vineyard Manager and Assistant Winemaker. He has also directly experienced winemaking and grape harvests in Burgundy, California, the Hunter Valley of Australia, and numerous regions of New Zealand.

### Anthony King

Anthony began his career in the wine industry planting Rhone varietals in central Texas. Raised in Corpus Christi, he left to pursue a Physics degree from Grinnell College in Iowa. A few years after college Anthony landed back in Texas editing a high-school physics textbook. A keen interest in cooking and foodiness led to an obsession with wine and a freelance wine writing gig with a local Austin newspaper. He then turned to friends in the local wine industry to begin his winemaking career. Leaving Texas in search of experience in a cooler climate, Anthony worked for a year in the Napa Valley before attending UC Davis, graduating with a Masters in Viticulture and Enology. His research focused on the effects of vineyard and winery practices on Pinot noir color and tannin. After graduation, he was hired as assistant winemaker at Carneros Pinot noir producer, Acacia Vineyards, where he went on to become winemaker, general manager and vineyard manager. In 2006, Anthony left Acacia to pursue the roots of his interest in Pinot noir at Lemelson Vineyards in Carlton, Oregon. Along with Lemelson's small crew and owner Eric Lemelson, Anthony produces Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot gris, and Pinot noir.

## PANELISTS

### Ben Casteel

Ben Casteel is a member of the second generation now coming on board at Bethel Heights Vineyard. Oldest son of two of the founders, Terry Casteel and Marilyn Webb, Ben grew up at Bethel Heights and worked in the vineyard during the summers. He graduated from the University of Oregon in 1999, then headed for Burgundy to work the 1999 vintage at Domaine des Perdrix. Upon return from Burgundy, he spent the next five years at Rex Hill Vineyards, working his way up from Cellar Master to Assistant Winemaker. In 2005, he finally came back to Bethel Heights where he is now Winemaker.

### James Frey

With an undergraduate degree in Exercise Physiology from the University of California, Berkeley; a Masters in Exercise Physiology from the University of Arizona; and an M.B.A. from the University of Arizona, it seemed unlikely that he would end up in wine. Nonetheless in 2003, he and his wife Andrea moved their young children to Oregon, bought a piece of land in the eastern foothills of the Coast Range mountains and planted the first of the three vineyards that now make up Trisaetum. A devout believer in the ability of both Pinot Noir and Riesling to

depict the site upon which they are planted, he not only bottles ten different Pinot Noirs, but also more than ten different Rieslings, each vintage. He currently works alongside Jacques Lardiere each harvest as Louis Jadot's Oregon fruit is vinified, aged, and bottled at Trisaetum. In addition to his role as Winemaker and Proprietor at Trisaetum, he is a nationally recognized artist with paintings and photographs sold throughout the United States and the world.

#### Erik Kramer

Erik is the winemaker for Domaine Serene, an ultra-premium Pinot noir and Chardonnay producer with nearly 190 acres of vineyards in the Dundee Hills and Eola-Amity Hills regions.

In 1999, Erik left a successful profession as a corporate geologist to pursue a career that allowed him to follow his passion for science and appreciation for fine wine. That career change prompted him to obtain a Postgraduate Diploma in Viticulture and Enology from Lincoln University in Christchurch, New Zealand, where he graduated with honors. Erik has now been making wine in Oregon's Willamette Valley since 2004. He joined Domaine Serene as winemaker in 2011 and has also worked for several highly acclaimed wineries in Oregon, New Zealand and Washington.

#### Jason Lett

Jason Lett is the second-generation president, winemaker, vineyard manager, (and self-proclaimed curator) of The Eyrie Vineyards. As the son of vanguard producers David and Diana Lett, Jason has had 40 years of experience with Oregon vineyards and winemaking, and has worked in Europe and New Zealand as well. He combines hands-on experience with a scientific background in research ecology. When he's not making wine, Jason and his wife tend a small farm of their own with livestock, including goats, sheep, chickens, and three young children.

#### Luisa Ponzi

Winemaker at Ponzi Vineyards since 1993, Luisa's winemaking experience is drawn from her lifelong work with her father and her studies in Europe. She has worked with top wine producers in Italy and France, and was awarded the certificate Brevet Professionnel d'Oenologie et Viticulture from the CFPPA de Beaune, France. She also holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Portland State University. She and her husband, Eric Hamacher, are partners in Hamacher Wines and The Carlton Winemakers' Studio. Luisa lives in Scholls with Eric and their four children, Nico, Mia, and twins, Matteo and Carlo, along with various exotic chickens, goats, Scottish Highland cows, bees, cats and dogs.

#### Wynne Peterson-Nedry

Wynne has been at Chehalem, her family's winery, from the beginning as a 6-month old in arms as papers were signed on the original property that would become Ridgecrest Vineyards. During her youth she spent free time hand labeling most of the first release 1990 Ridgecrest Vineyards Pinot Noir, working part of harvest twice during high school and college, and working summers for several years. Wynne graduated from Bryn Mawr College with a degree in chemistry in 2002, she went on to experience several careers in the outside world before admitting to the fact that her heart resided in the Oregon wine country. She graduated with a Masters' degree from UC Davis' Viticulture & Enology program in 2008, after completing a project and thesis on Pinot Noir tannin evolution from grape to wine, and has worked multiple harvests around the world including two vintages in New Zealand, one in Burgundy, and one in California. She officially joined the Chehalem family as assistant winemaker in June of 2009, and in 2012 became lead winemaker. She lives in Portland with her dog, Holden.