



THE NICOLAS-JAY VINEYARD PROGRAM

DRAWING FROM HIS THREE DECADES OF EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH FOUR OF BURGUNDY'S GRANDS CRUS AND TEN OF ITS PREMIERS CRUS, WINEMAKER AND COFOUNDER JEAN-NICOLAS MÉO SELECTED A HANDFUL OF EXCEPTIONAL VINEYARDS IN OREGON FROM WHICH TO MAKE NICOLAS-JAY'S WINES. CHOSEN FOR THE CHARACTER AND THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PINOT NOIRS THEY PRODUCE, THESE VINEYARDS INCLUDE SITES LIKE NYSA, MONTAZI AND ZENITH—ALL OF WHICH HAVE REGULARLY BEEN THE SOURCE FOR SINGLE-VINEYARD PINOT NOIRS. HOWEVER, AT THE HEART OF THE NICOLAS-JAY VINEYARD PROGRAM IS THE WINERY'S OWN BISHOP CREEK VINEYARD IN THE RENOWNED YAMHILL-CARLTON APPELLATION. WITH ITS OLDER VINES, STEEP SLOPES, CLONAL DIVERSITY AND RANGE OF ELEVATIONS, BISHOP CREEK YIELDS WINES THAT ARE AS DISTINCTIVE AND POWERFUL AS THEY ARE NUANCED AND COMPLEX.

WORKING ALONGSIDE COFOUNDER JAY BOBERG AND ASSOCIATE WINEMAKER TRACY KENDALL, JEAN-NICOLAS BRINGS BURGUNDIAN TRADITIONS TO THE FARMING OF NICOLAS-JAY'S WILLAMETTE VALLEY FRUIT, WHILE AIMING TO AUTHENTICALLY REFLECT OREGON'S COMPELLING TERROIR. IN PRACTICE, THIS IS ACHIEVED THROUGH A UNIQUE APPROACH TO CANOPY MANAGEMENT THAT FOCUSES ON DOING LESS LEAF PULLING, IN ORDER TO SLOW RIPENING, WHILE HELPING TO RETAIN MORE NATURAL ACIDITY IN THE GRAPES. DURING FRUIT THINNING, THE TEAM FOCUSES ON REMOVING BIGGER CLUSTERS AND LARGER BERRIES. THOUGH THIS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES YIELDS, IT INCREASES OVERALL INTENSITY AND DEPTH. THROUGH THESE METHODS, AND OTHERS, NICOLAS-JAY PRACTICES A FARMING APPROACH THAT HELPS TO ACCENTUATE THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF EACH WINEGROWING SITE.

BISHOP CREEK VINEYARD

WHILE JEAN-NICOLAS AND JAY HAD NO INTENTION OF BUYING A WILLAMETTE VALLEY VINEYARD AS EARLY AS THEY DID IN THE LIFE OF NICOLAS-JAY, A BARREL SAMPLE OF PINOT NOIR FROM BISHOP CREEK VINEYARD WAS ENOUGH TO CONVINCEN THEM OTHERWISE. TASTED BLIND ALONGSIDE 20 OTHER SINGLE-VINEYARD BARREL SAMPLES, IT WAS A DRAMATIC "WOW" WINE. "JEAN-NICOLAS AND I BOTH FELL IN LOVE WITH BISHOP CREEK BEFORE WE EVER SAW IT," SAYS JAY. "WHEN WE DID FINALLY SEE IT, WITH ITS STEEP SLOPES, AND OLD PINOT NOIR VINES, THAT JUST SEALED THE DEAL. IT WAS SO CLEARLY A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH. WE BOTH KNEW THAT IT HAD THE POTENTIAL TO BE A VINEYARD THAT WE COULD BUILD NICOLAS-JAY AROUND."

LOCATED IN THE YAMHILL-CARLTON APPELLATION, BISHOP CREEK VINEYARD HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN BOTTLED AS A VINEYARD-DESIGNATE PINOT NOIR BY ERATH, AS WELL AS SEVERAL OTHER WINERIES. THE SITE FEATURES 13.5 PLANTED ACRES, WITH 11 OF THOSE ACRES BEING FOUR DIFFERENT CLONES OF PINOT NOIR: 777, WÄDENSWIL, POMMARD AND 667. THE MAJORITY OF THE PINOT NOIR VINES AT BISHOP CREEK WERE PLANTED IN 1988 AND 1990, WITH THESE OLDER PLANTING BEING OWN-ROOTED. THE YOUNGEST PLANTINGS AT BISHOP CREEK ARE FROM 2002. ADDING TO THE SITE'S DIVERSITY, THE ELEVATIONS AT BISHOP CREEK RANGE FROM 270 TO 600 FEET, WITH PREDOMINANTLY NORTH-SOUTH PLANTINGS. IN TERMS OF MODERN OREGON VITICULTURE, BISHOP CREEK IS ALSO RELATIVELY UNIQUE FOR ITS TIGHT VINE SPACING, WITH MOST OF THE SPACING BEING 5' x 5'. IN KEEPING WITH THEIR BELIEF IN STEWARDSHIP AND PROMOTING A HEALTHY VINEYARD ENVIRONMENT, BISHOP CREEK HAS BEEN FARMED 100% ORGANICALLY SINCE BEING ACQUIRED BY JEAN-NICOLAS AND JAY IN 2014.

NYSA VINEYARD

1002-A NORTH SPRINGBROOK ROAD, SUITE 115, NEWBERG, OR 97132 •
NICOLAS-JAY.COM

“Nysa, like Bishop Creek, is one of those really exciting vineyards that reminds me why I came here from Burgundy,” says Jean-Nicolas. “It’s a gem that produces a beautifully seductive and charming wine. At the same time, its charms are not superficial—it is also a very complex wine. While its overall character is uniquely Oregonian, it has qualities that are reminiscent of the great vineyards of Chambolle-Musigny.”

Situated at an elevation of 600 to 720 feet in the Dundee Hills, Nysa Vineyard neighbors Domaine Drouhin in the northern Willamette Valley. Planted in 1990 by Michael Mega, and still farmed by him today, this family-owned site is recognized as the source for some of Oregon’s most exciting Pinot Noirs. Nicolas-Jay’s grapes come from a coveted block of own-rooted Pommard clone vines that are some of the site’s original 1990 plantings. These tightly spaced vines grow in Jory volcanic soils with an underlying layer of basalt bedrock that helps allow the vines to be dry farmed. Nicolas-Jay’s 1.5-acre block is located near the top of the vineyard with an east-facing exposure and roughly a 6% grade. The older vines on this block naturally produce yields of just 2.0-2.5 tons per acre.

MOMTAZI VINEYARD

Located in the foothills of Oregon’s Coastal Range, in the McMinnville Appellation, Momtazi Vineyard was planted in 1998 by Moe and Flora Momtazi, who continue to guide the site today. Though Momtazi’s hillside location results in somewhat warmer days, it is also a relatively windy site, with nights that are quite cool. Nicolas Jay’s block is right near the top of the vineyard at an elevation of 740 feet. This steep, sloping block, which features a north-south row orientation, was planted in 1999 to clone 115 Pinot Noir on 3309 rootstock, with 5’ x 7’ spacing. In addition to the age of its vines and its hillside location, the wines from this vineyard are also defined by the Momtazi family’s commitment to biodynamic farming.

“This is one of those vineyards where the biodynamic method is very impactful in terms of the final wine,” says Jean-Nicolas. “It helps to slow the ripening in the vineyard, which results in a very elegant and very distinctive wine. This can be especially important in warmer vintages, when Momtazi contributes a fresh, poised expression of Pinot Noir that can be an essential element in the blend.” While Associate Winemaker Tracy Kendall also loves the finesse of the wine from Momtazi, she also prizes its more elemental side. “It may seem like a contradiction, but while Momtazi yields an elegant wine, there is also a wildness about it that I think very much reflects the terroir, the biodynamics, and the overall biosphere of the vineyard.”

ZENITH VINEYARD

Like Momtazi and Nysa, Zenith Vineyard is a source for top single-vineyard Oregon Pinot Noirs. Located in the Eola-Amity Hills Appellation, Zenith was first planted in the mid-1990s, and has been owned by noted businessperson and winegrower Tim Ramey since 2002. Guided by Tim, this extremely diverse site is meticulously farmed with a commitment to sustainable winegrowing techniques, which includes not using any herbicides or insecticides. Nicolas-Jay works with two blocks of Zenith Vineyard, both of which were planted in 1999. The first block is at an elevation of 250 feet and features clone 777 grapes on 101-14 rootstock in fine silty loam Helmick and Helvetia soils. The second block is 100 feet up the hill, and has Pommard clone vines planted in Jory and Nekia silty clay loam soils.

“ZENITH YIELDS VERY BALANCED WINES,” SAYS JEAN-NICOLAS.” WHILE IT HAS LOVELY DARK BERRY AND BRAMBLY FRUIT NOTES, IT ALSO HAS GOOD MINERALITY AND BRIGHTNESS. TOGETHER, THE QUALITIES MAKE IT AN EXCITING ELEMENT IN THE BLEND.” FOR TRACY, ONE OF THE CHARMS OF ZENITH IS THAT IT BRINGS A VERY DISTINCT REPRESENTATION OF THE EOLA-AMITY HILLS AVA TO NICOLAS-JAY. “EOLA-AMITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF MY FAVORITE REGIONS IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY,” ADDS TRACY. “WHILE IT DELIVERS DEPTH AND POWERFUL TANNINS, IT ALSO PROVIDES VERY PRETTY SPICE. IT IS EXCITING TO BE ABLE TO WORK WITH THIS FRUIT IN OUR WILLAMETTE VALLEY PINOT NOIR.”