



October 29, 2009

Dear Friends,

As expected, we learned a new lesson this year as we do every year. Pollination in the vineyard was at an all time high. Every single berry is its own flower and, unlike many fruits, grapes are hermaphroditic. They have both male and female parts and so do not need the help of bees to pollinate. Great weather during spring flowering left us with not only very large berries, but fertility was at a level we have never seen in our twenty-four vintages in Oregon.

Our concern was that our skin to juice ratio would be reduced, resulting in less color, flavor and aroma. This is important since all of these properties reside in the skin tissue. Three weeks before our first harvest of fruit we had a wet weekend that gave us an inch of rain. Gads! The possibility of further dilution was very real. Instead, that rain event was followed by several days with 90 degree temperatures and the berries suddenly and prematurely shriveled, well before being physiologically ripe.

Now our concern was that we would have overly ripe flavors of prune and such when the fruit was ready for harvest. What we have learned is that physiology (mechanisms that create real ripeness) should not be mistaken for morphology (the physical look of the grape). Though quite a few of the clusters received had desiccated berries we have seen absolutely no qualities that suggest overly mature aromas or flavors. No prune or raisin-like character at all. Rather, we are seeing thrilling fresh fruit aromas as we press off each batch of fruit. The fragrance of these wines is powerful and high toned. This vintage has given us a lesson that what you see is not necessarily what you should expect. Thank you Mother Nature for a wonderful and free correction.

I can never say enough about our staff and volunteers. Everyone in the company has worked without a day off for the last two months, diligently carrying out each task with great attention to detail. Our volunteers were there in numbers at every point when we needed them most. Together, through our combined efforts, we made a difference and elevated the quality of the wine. We are very proud of the 2009 vintage and are anxious to show you the results.

Please join us on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of November, the two days following Thanksgiving, from 10 to 4 each day when we will thief wine for you from the barrels of the latest vintage.

We thank all of you for supporting our efforts over so many years. You have been the lifeblood of our business and have allowed us to pursue the craft we love.

Ken