



Dear friends,

After thirty-five years of winemaking experience in Oregon and California, I can count the truly great years on three fingers. 1979 in California's Monterey County, 1990 in the Willamette Valley and, yes, 2012 in the Willamette Valley as well.

We have an amazing team with terrific depth of experience that gives us the ability to produce wine that delivers a very pleasurable bottle from the challenging vintages. But there are years when we simply sit in awe as Mother Nature hands us remarkable fruit that only requires that we respect the gift we have received. 2012 is such a year.

The intensity of color, aroma and flavor is inspiring. The onus has been on us to protect those qualities at all costs. We know how special this vintage is and that this kind of opportunity is rare. My promise to you is that we have cared for the fruit from each of our sites as if this **was** the last great vintage we would experience. I do of course hope this is not true as I expect several decades more of active winemaking. But you never know. I may be dragged out of the winery by my Red Wing boots at eighty without seeing another year like this.

The booming propane cannons that are used to scare off the migratory starlings and cedar waxwings can make the valley sound like a war zone. It is exasperating for everyone when a grower forgets to turn them off at nightfall and it happens several times every year. In our hope to be a better neighbor we have turned to falcons for control of predacious birds. It is nothing short of amazing to see flocks of birds vanish when the falcons are in the air. Unlike propane cannons, which are ineffective after a few days, the falcons remain a very real threat. Sister-in-law Susi Crum has jumped into falconry training with both feet and captured a juvenile kestrel early this fall. In a few years, after quite a bit more training, she will be able to work with full size falcons. Go Susi!

Another current topic that has my full attention is the recent creation of a viticulture program at Yamhill-Carlton High School. With the support of the Yamhill Carlton Winegrowers Association, Chemeketa College, the FFA program at YC High School, the principal of the high school and the Yamhill Carlton school board, we were successful this year in establishing a curriculum for the students that gives college credits toward a grape growing degree. It was time for our industry, now mature, to step up and support the young people in our community that wish to pursue a path in agriculture that has been previously unavailable. This program is now real and being taught as of this fall. It will include the planting of a "land lab", beginning with one acre of Pinot noir on school property which will provide a hands on experience that is rare for a high school student. This is the first program of its type in Oregon, and to my knowledge, the country.

We are offering two new vineyards this year. Bryce Vineyard, planted in the Ribbon Ridge AVA in 1999 by Bryce and Marcia Bagnall, is an exceptional site. We were honored that after Bryce's passing Marcia

approached us about a long term relationship with the vineyard. We established a fifteen year lease and our team now farms Bryce Vineyard. This is the first Ribbon Ridge AVA wine we have produced in many years. We sourced fruit from Beaux Freres from '91 to '93, then Mike Etzel realized there simply was not enough profit in growing grapes alone, turned his pig barn into a very nice wine facility and kept his fruit in house. We are pleased that Marcia Bagnall asked us to take over her special five acre site and we are very excited to be working with Ribbon Ridge fruit again.

Sister Susi and her bird loving husband Art (a Delta pilot) purchased property near our home vineyard Savoya several years ago. We were enthusiastic about the potential of the site and entered into a thirty year lease (yikes!) to develop the best part of the land (6.5 acres) for vineyard. They have coined the vineyard Tanager, named after the colorful Western Tanager that inhabits our area for a number of weeks in the spring.

We have heard from so many that you would like to have the opportunity to purchase every vineyard that we offer without the need to purchase a half case of each. Beginning this year you have the option to do exactly that. The "**Vineyard Sampler**" is two full cases (24 bottles) which will include two bottles of each vineyard site that we produce. A great opportunity for horizontal tastings.

We will be open for tasting of this great vintage on the 23rd and 24th of November from 10 am to 4 pm. We hope to see you here.

Our heartfelt thanks for your continued support of our endeavors,

Best, Ken