

## LEGENDS OF STAG HOLLOW

as heard through the grapevine...(~Halloween, 2005)

Volume 9.1

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*Our mission: craft distinct, individual wines that reflect the place of origin using best vineyard practices and minimal winemaking intervention.*

Greetings from the Hollow,

### '04 Vintage Ballyhoo'd

No doubt you'll be hearing stellar accolades for Oregon's 2004 pinot noir vintage as wines from this vintage trickle onto the marketplace over the next year or so. Wines from this vintage, one of the smallest grape crops ever, are likely to be hailed as Oregon's finest to date. The 2002 vintage, which has been bestowed as Oregon's best, are fabulous, but for reasons different than what the '04s have to offer. 2002 pinot noirs are beautifully balanced between plush, forward fruit and great depth. 2004 pinot noirs, in contrast, are all about concentrated flavors that entertain the palate with "poised" power and refined stylishness. At Stag Hollow, the 2004 pinots tend to resemble the 1998 vintage, one of our favorites.

2004 Oregon pinot noirs will be scarce because of a poor flower set and droughty conditions, which set yields back to under a ton per acre throughout much of the Willamette Valley. Wineries that have offered futures sales already have sold out quickly. Because of this, some wine lots will never make it to retail stores.

Stag Hollow's first offering of '04 futures is coming up soon, at the traditional Thanksgiving openings (see below) when barrel samples of '04 Reserve pinot noir will be available for tasting. Estimated production for this wine is ~100-125 cases. As usual, Stag Hollow's futures prices will be about 35 to 40 percent below retail. Don't miss this one!

### Open Two Thanksgiving Weekends

Stag Hollow is open for the Thanksgiving holiday season:

**November 25 to 27, Friday through Sunday**, after Thanksgiving (three days), 11-5. Join us at the big bar in the historic former saloon in "downtown" Yamhill, known locally as Zippy's "café" (1 block south of State Route 240 and 47 intersection – see page 6 for map)

**November 19**, the Saturday before Thanksgiving, Stag Hollow will be **open noon to 4 PM at the vineyard tasting room** (map to vineyard on page 6, the cover of the newsletter and directions available at [www.staghollow.com](http://www.staghollow.com)).

Available for tasting and purchase will be the Stag Hollow 1995 *Vendange Sélection* pinot noir, praised by wine critic Clive Coates as among the top 2 pinots from this vintage; 5 current and new releases of pinot noir: 2001 and 2002 *Vendange Sélection*, 2001 *Reserve*, 2003 *Yamhill-Carlton District* and *Cuvée*; 2004 pinot noir futures; 2002 *Dolcetto*; 2003 *Field Blend* red table wine; dry muscat-chardonnay white table wine (*Tre Secco*); and Stag Hollow's white port (*Tre Dolce*). Price of the tasting is \$3.00 for 4 value wines all under \$18.00; \$5.00 for the 2004 pinot noir futures, 2003 pinot noirs, and the 4 value wines; and \$8.00 for all 11 wines, including vintages before 2003. Join us for some terrific wine, delicious food, rich chocolates, and good conversation. Case purchases of **current** releases are 20% off (except what remains of the 2002s pinot noir are 15% off).

### The Aging Report

Jill and Mark have aged another vintage. To keep our "youth," we taste through the entire collection of Stag Hollow pinot noirs annually (we call it the fountain of...., others the "library" collection) to update and report on the aging of these wines.

We recommend following the progression of one or more of Stag Hollow pinot noirs by opening 1-2 bottles per year and tracking the evolution over a 4-8 year period. In lieu of that, each year we offer an updated “Vintage Chart” to assist you in deciding when to pull the cork.

### **Vintage Chart 94-03**

#### **2005 Stag Hollow Pinot Noir Vintage Chart**

Vintage	Wine	Drink Range	[plateau]
1994	<i>Celebré</i>	now to 2008	
1995	<i>Celebré</i>	now to 2006	
1995	<i>Vendange Sélection</i>	now to 2008	
1996	<i>Vendange Sélection</i>	now to 2006	
1998	<i>Vendange Sélection</i>	now to 2010	[2006-7]
1999	<i>Vendange Sélection</i>	now to 2008	[2005-7]
2000	<i>Vendange Sélection</i>	now to 2009	[2005-7]
2001	<i>Vendange Sélection</i>	hold/now to 2011	[2006]
2002	<i>Vendange Sélection</i>	hold/now to 2012	[2006]
2000	<i>Reserve</i>	now to 2009	[2005-7]
2001	<i>Reserve</i>	now to 2011	[2006-9]
2002	<i>Reserve</i>	now to 2010	[2006-8]
2000	<i>Cuvée</i>	now to 2008	[2005]
2001	<i>Cuvée</i>	now to 2007	[2005]
2003	<i>Cuvée</i>	now to 2007	[2005-7]
2002	<i>Yamhill County</i>	now to 2008	[2006]
2003	<i>Yamhill-Carlton</i>	now to 2007	[2006]

[Hold/now refers to drinking well now, while enhanced development in bottle is likely. Plateau refers to the most favorable time period (in our opinion) to consume the wine. *Celebré* name was discontinued after the 1996 when it was merged with the *Vendange Sélection*. Production of the *Reserve* designation began in 2000, when a vineyard block of new Dijon clones came into production and was allocated solely for the *Reserve* designation.]

**A few notes.** We continue to be pleased by the long-term aging of the Stag Hollow pinot noirs. The 1994 and 1995 *Celebré* and 1995 *Vendange Sélection* pinot noirs, which are huge inky wines, are tasting great and have several to perhaps many more years left in them; yet, there is nothing that should hold you back from finishing these wines in the near term. Being from a cool and slightly damp vintage, the '96 *Vendange Sélection* is lighter in color and heft compared to its siblings from other vintages. On its own, the '96 is a lovely pinot noir that has aged gracefully; we recommend consuming it in the next year or so (this wine will be poured at the 2006 Thanksgiving open house).

Last spring, Mark was invited to be the winemaker representative on a wine “industry” panel that appraised six Oregon pinot noirs from the '98 vintage. The '98 Stag Hollow *Vendange Sélection* was paired against a '98 from what arguably is Oregon's most famous producer (unfortunately in this tasting the famous '98 had passed its prime). Of all the

wines poured, the panel felt the *Vendange Sélection* showed the most promise for further long-term aging.

Earlier this year, the '99 *Vendange Sélection* and 2000 *Reserve* seemed to slumber for a while (flavors close-in); however, recent tastings of these wines during harvest festivities confirmed that they've awoken and were last seen humming Santana's “Supernatural”.

So, which Stag Hollow pinot noirs will not be monitored any further and have been taken off the Vintage Chart? This year, they are the '96 *Celebré* and '99 *Vinnae*, both of which clearly need to be consumed soon. And if you have a Stag Hollow pinot noir in your cellar that is not on the Vintage Chart, it means one of three things: you have too much wine in your cellar, you tend to hold wines too long (“can't let go of these wines” syndrome), or you're not finding enough reasons celebrate. Cheers!

[p.s. We've heard from many on how much you appreciated the “Winemaker's Tip” column on evaluating wine age-ability that appeared in the 2004 newsletter, and are testing the method. A .pdf copy of this tip has been posted at our website [Staghollow.com](http://Staghollow.com).]

### **New Releases**

#### **2003: A “muscular vintage”**

Body building anyone? Desire to have that strapping look? Try the 2003 Oregon pinot noirs on for size. What a vintage! Everyone knew that the 2003 vintage was extraordinarily hot, especially at harvest, and had the potential to produce some massive wines with higher alcohols, but what has unfolded industry wide is notable. Most Oregon producers are reporting the highest alcohol levels ever for pinot noir, with numerous wines well into the 15s--percent that is. The good news is that many of these wines have such massive structure that the higher alcohol is well integrated, akin to a well made Zinfandel (most well-made Zins range in the 15s, with some cult wines pushing 16 to 17 percent). The bad news is that some Oregon '03 pinot noirs are too tannic or lack the fruit and balanced structure to carry the higher alcohol. It's a tricky vintage, so select your '03s with caution and care. In general, the '03s are likely to be very short-lived wines, destined for near-term consumption, because of low acids and potentially ephemeral fruit flavors. Excluding '03s, '99-'04s all have good aging potential—so why wait on the '03s: enjoy now!

At Stag Hollow in '03, sugars at harvest were not far out of the normal range. Most lots came in at 23.4 to 24.2 degrees Brix. However, we did have one lot at

27.8 degrees Brix: young vines harvested on a very warm, dry day with an east wind. Fortunately, the Stag Hollow '03 pinot noirs have always tasted in balance, including the 12 months while in barrel. So rich and well balanced that the lab measuring the alcohol of these wines redid the test 4 times because they did not believe the results, 14.9%.

Hmmm. That got us to ponder a philosophical business question; that is, given the perplexing attributes of our '03 pinot noirs, great depth, richness, and flavors, but potentially short-lived and alcohol levels outside the normal range for pinot noir, should we be making a "reserve" this vintage? Stag Hollow "reserve-level" pinot noirs are expected to be capable of longer-term aging. Right? After much sampling and debate, we concluded that long-term aging is too uncertain for the '03 vintage. Thus, wine that just a few months ago that was to be labeled as reserve, was renamed as *Cuvée*, and the retail price was reduced accordingly to \$29.95, \$10 less per bottle than the reserve—an exceptional value!!!! For those who bought "Reserve" futures last Thanksgiving and pre-release last spring, you have won the Stag Hollow lottery—so to speak, because for each case ordered you will receive a \$75 gift certificate towards Stag Hollow wines or receive 4 additional bottles of '03 *Cuvée* per case ordered (1/2 case orders qualify for a \$30 gift certificate, or 2 additional bottles). Ye-ha, free Christmas presents for family, friends, and co-workers.

With all this talk about the *Reserve*, where did the '03 *Vendange Sélection* go, anyway? More good news. It is a dominant component of our second tier wine for '03, the *Yamhill-Carlton District* pinot noir. Oh my, what a stunning value at \$19.95. A huge, powerful, and delicious wine that is ready to drink now. Not to miss! (237 cases produced; case price \$191.50 = \$15.96/btl---a price for everyday drinking)

In the newsletter last year, we hinted that a new Stag Hollow wine name was coming, *Yamhill-Carlton District* pinot noir, named after a new grape-growing appellation where Stag Hollow resides. Last year, the appellation was not approved by the federal government in time for release of our 2002 wines, so as an intermediary solution we used *Yamhill County*, an approved designation for wines hailing from this county. Meanwhile, the new appellation name has been approved; thus, from hereon, the *Yamhill-Carlton District* designation replaces *Yamhill County*.

And a drum role please for what many have been patiently waiting for: the '03 *Field Blend* red is now officially available for purchase. *Field Blend* is a *mélange* of different grape varieties that are artfully blended to make a tasty (everyday) country wine. The 2003 blend consists of dolcetto, lemberger, pinot

noir, and chardonnay. Like our other '03s, it's a powerful wine with extraordinary depth and complex flavors, especially for the bottle price, \$10.95. This is truly a bargain that is being sold customer direct only (not available in stores), given that there are too many mass-produced fruit syrup like wines lurking around grocery shelves in this price range these days (especially from down under). So for heavens sakes, stock up on the *Field Blend* while it lasts. Enjoy with weekday dining or holiday entertaining. (264 cases produced; case price \$105.12 = \$8.76/btl!!!!),

## Current Releases

### 2001 *Vendange Sélection* and *Reserve* pinot noirs

Hiding in the shadows of the acclaimed 2002s, the 2001 vintage *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* pinot noirs have been quietly waiting their turn. Their time has come and the wait was worth it. The 2001 pinot noirs have been among the slowest developing wines we've experience at Stag hollow. Usually the pieces of the "structural" puzzle come together by year three; but, this vintage took four. We are at a loss to explain why. Nonetheless, we are very pleased with where these wines are headed, and definitely worthy of a second look. As usual, the *Reserve* is developing faster than the *Vendange Sélection*. Both wines have excellent depth, structure, and aging potential, and may rival or surpass our popular '00s in complexity. The 2001 *Vendange Sélection* and *Reserve* pinot noirs are on holiday season special at \$35.95/bottle and \$28.76/bottle at case price.

### 2002 pinot noirs, any left?

Last year at this time we released our 2002s to direct sales customers and then last spring released the '02 *Reserve* and *Yamhill County* for retail store and restaurant/wine bar sales. The '02 pinot noirs have sold themselves, mostly by word of mouth, especially at outlets that have honed a following for Stag Hollow pinots. The '02 *Reserve* and *Yamhill County* were sent to the 2005 Northwest Wine Summit wine judging, where both wines won gold medals. The *Reserve* received the "Best in Region" award for Oregon. As of this writing we have 4 cases of the *Reserve* (\$39.95/btl) and about 25 cases of the *Yamhill County* (23.95/btl), if our Oregon wholesaler, *Ce Coir*, hasn't sold them yet.

For 2002, the *Vendange Sélection*, which blossomed later than the *Reserve*, was released to the retail marketplace just a few months ago, and we have about 50 cases to take us through the holiday season. This wine, with additional aging, has integrated its spice and dark cherry flavors with the 40 percent new oak barrels flavors (from *Vosges*, *Tronçais*, and *Allier* forests in France and from

Oregon oak forests); this wine is especially alluring and satisfying! [Winemaker's top choice for the most complex and longest finish of the Stag Hollow pinots from this vintage-- \$37.95/btl]

### ***A Versatile White Wine for the Holidays***

Company coming? Tired of serving guests simple bulk-produced wines? Searching for a wine crowd-pleaser for the holidays? Let us put some oomph into your holiday entertaining with our muscat-chardonnay blend, called Tre Secco. Stag Hollow's unique blend of early muscat (20%), muscat ottonel (38%), and chardonnay (42%) has lovely peach and apricot fruit flavors, infused with a muscat zing. With rose petal aromas, big mouth feel, and complex flavors, this wine would fool many in a blind tasting as a gewürztraminer. Our holiday discount on the '02 is \$9.95/btl (\$1.55 off) and case price at 20% discount is \$95.50 (=~\$7.95/btl). In its price range, this wine is assured to be a big hit for your entertainment dollar ('03 is \$11.50/bottle, at 20% case discount the bottle price is \$9.20).

### ***2005 Harvest***

January through mid March 2005 was the driest ever for that period in last 100+ years. With that, came temperatures well above normal, spiking near 80 in February! Late March through June was wet, and more wet, and cool. Fortunately the warm, dry winter got bud break off to an early start that helped flowering to occur at about average time, mid June. Unfortunately, the cool and wet weather decreased the flower set. Some blocks had only ¼ of the normal crop load. Especially hard hit were the two muscat varieties and pinot noir clone 667, and to some degree the pommard and colmar 538 block, also known as our *Vendange Sélection* pinot noir. Because yields were so small in the muscat blocks, we did not make a muscat-chardonnay blend in '05. The small amount of muscat that we did harvest is fermenting at Belle Pente winery, and interestingly, separate from chardonnay for the first time. More details on that collaboration in future newsletters. Most of the reserve block of pinot noir (primarily Dijon clones) produced better than expected. Given the showery conditions during harvest, the '05 fruit looked and tasted surprisingly good. Harvest of pinot noir began in the reserve block, October 5-6, before much rain had fallen for the season. About a 1/3 inch of rain ensued before we harvested the pommard block on October 9. A week later, harvest was over as we snipped the large-clustered dolcetto block. Pinot noir achieved good color and sugars, all lots ranged from 23.4 to 24.6 degrees Brix, except one Pommard-Colmar 538 lot, at 22.1, harvested while enshrouded in a thick fog! This year was by far

the worst bird feeding damage on grapes in a decade or more. We lost 5% or more of our crop to voracious flocks of American robins, mostly, and cedar waxwings and starlings. It was "Civil War" for two weeks, in battle, scaring birds away from the ever-so tantalizing clusters. Every sweet and juicy lemlinger grape went down the gullet, fattening the migrating hordes.

### ***Winemaker's Roundtable (Huff's Fluff)***

This year marks my 20<sup>th</sup> vintage crafting Oregon pinot noirs. Huh, 20 years of pinot; that's why my hair is graying. Long ago, before Jill and I went commercial with Stag Hollow Wines in 1994, I "stained" my teeth working with California zin, cab, and merlot, with the great 1984 and 1985 vintages, importing the grapes northward. In 1986, I was bit by the challenges of the "heartbreak" grape, pinot noir, and have never looked back (to California grapes). For me, Oregon vintages 1986 to 1993 were considered a pre-commercial apprenticeship, when we purchased grapes from the Wahle Vineyard, which borders the site that we purchased for Stag Hollow Vineyards in 1989. During that era, most of the Wahle Vineyard grapes were trucked to Rex Hill where it was bulk-blended; however, the Wahle's held back a portion of their production for a band of budding winemakers who would produce individualist wines that expressed their vineyard. Here, I spent most of my time in one particular place, an experimental block established in 1972 by Oregon State University. This remarkable find had all of the pinot noir clones of the pre-Dijon clone era. I hand-harvested and made many wine lots of individual and blended clones from this block. Successes with these trials laid the foundation for the Stag Hollow pommard-colmar 538 clonal planting, the basis for our *Vendange Sélection* pinot noir...Yes dear, I know, I'm out of space. So, more stories next time. In closing, I hope to see you at the upcoming tastings at the vineyard (19<sup>th</sup>) or Zippy's Café (25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>).

*Cheers, Jill and Mark*

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**STAG HOLLOW 2004 PINOT NOIR**

**FUTURES-OUTSTANDING VINTAGE**

☉ **No further case discount - Released fall '06** ☉

**'04 PINOT NOIR**

➤ **12 bottle pack 2004 Reserve pinot noir** (750 ml) @\$299 (equals bottle price: ~\$24.90)  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

➤ **6 bottle pack 2004 Reserve pinot noir** (750 ml) @\$169 (equals bottle price: ~\$28.15)  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Shipping & Handling** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# STAG HOLLOW

## 2005 Holiday Season Wine Tastings

TASTE '01, '02, '03, '04, & '95 Stag Hollow Pinot Noirs

Specials and terrific prices (yes, the Field Blend!)

Case price discounts for most wines at 20% Off

'04 Pinot Futures (huge savings), Dolcetto, Muscat-Chardonnay

FULL-BODIED ARTISTICALLY CRAFTED WINES

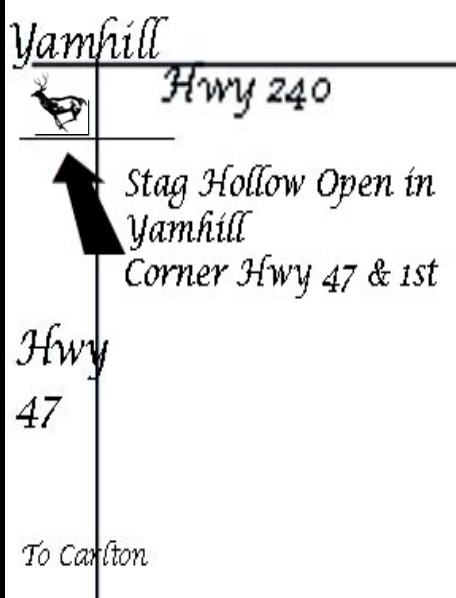
Friday – Sunday, November 25, 26, & 27, 11 AM – 5 PM

Tasting (\$3/\$5/\$8) & Sales

Oven Fresh Bread Made on Premise · Fine Chocolate!

503-662-5609 (or 11/26 - 28: 503-662-3025) [www.staghollow.com](http://www.staghollow.com)

(also open at Vineyard site Nov. 19, 12-4)



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MAP TO STAG HOLLOW  
Nov. 19 2005; Noon – 4 PM

