

Pinot Noir Press



DION VINEYARD

For over forty years, three generations of the Johnson family have farmed premium wine grapes in Oregon's Chehalem Mountains, where they now produce tiny amounts of distinctive, terroir-driven wines.



Located just outside of greater Portland, Oregon, nestled in the Chehalem Mountains of the northern Willamette Valley is Dion Vineyard, a family-owned and operated estate that dates back to 1973. Here, in this little slice of heaven in the beautiful Northwest, owner/winemaker Kevin Johnson carries on third-generation winegrowing traditions, supplying premium wine grapes for several nearby wineries while also crafting limited quantities of terroir-driven wines under his own Dion Vineyard wine label.

into a very successful enterprise. The vineyard also expanded from its humble beginnings to the 60-acres it is today. When the baton was passed to Ron's son, Kevin, he decided to try his hand at winemaking and the Dion Vineyard wine label finally became a reality in 2007.



The Johnson Family winegrowing legacy began with Kevin's grandfather, Al Johnson, who once grew grapes and produced wines near Sunnyside, Washington in the Yakima Valley. It was Al's son, Ron, who purchased the family's first five acres in Oregon's Chehalem Mountains in 1973 to continue the next generation of winegrowing traditions. With the help of Al, Ron's wife Joanne, and their young toddler Kevin, the family planted their first Pinot Noir vines on the property. Along the way, the Johnsons learned of the in's and out's of year-round vine care and the necessary techniques of perfecting cool-climate grape growing.

Kevin, an aeronautical engineer by training, followed an unexpected path to becoming a winemaker at his family's vineyard. After attending the Naval Academy, Kevin went on to become an officer in the Navy where he served for ten years. He holds a degree in Aerospace Engineering and also spent time working for SpaceX in Los Angeles - so yes, Kevin has even dabbled in rocket science. When Kevin decided to move home and help grow the family winegrowing business, he was determined to do so thoughtfully - after all, Dion Vineyard was where he grew up and it held a special place in his heart.



For decades, the Johnson family sold most of their fruit to other wineries and they grew Dion Vineyard

Under Kevin's direction, Dion Vineyard began producing small-lot wines of exceptional quality. Their focus has primarily been on Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris, but they also offer limited quantities of sparkling wines, Tempranillo, Rose, Viongier, and Chardonnay - all estate grown at Dion Vineyard. Winemaking duties

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are shared by Kevin and his wife Beth, and they intentionally only release a small annual production of around 1,000 cases. They also continue to provide premium wine grapes to other Willamette Valley wineries from their beautiful 60-acre property. In their grapes and in their wines, Kevin and Beth strive to achieve a sense of terroir - a sense of the people and the place that are home to these vines.

Maintaining sustainable farming practices at Dion Vineyard is also of vital importance to the couple. In their eyes, sustainable farming has a direct impact on the expressiveness of their wines, and with fewer inputs, the land and soil can shine through into the bottle more clearly. Under their guidance, Dion Vineyard became L.I.V.E. (Low Input Viticulture and Enology) Certified in 2009, which verifies their use of sustainable agricultural techniques and their commitment to being good stewards of the land.

The Dion Vineyard tasting room opened in May of 2015 in Cornelius, Oregon, offering visitors a warm and inviting setting for enjoying their hard-to-find, award-winning wines.

We are happy to share this rising star Oregon wine producer with our *Pinot Noir Wine Club* members. Cheers!

DION 2015 'OLD VINES' PINOT NOIR Chehalem Mountains, Willamette Valley, Oregon

The Dion 2015 'Old Vines' Pinot Noir has a light, bright ruby color that is very typical for Pinots from the Chehalem Mountains' Laurelwood soils. On the palate, this wine offers a nice tart structure with red fruit flavors of tart cherries and ripe strawberries with hints of pomegranate, dried herb, cloves, graham crackers and cinnamon. It finishes with soft, lightly grained tannins. Aged 14 months in oak. 100% Pinot Noir. Enjoy!

94 POINTS

– *Wine Enthusiast magazine*

93 POINTS

– *Prince of Pinot*



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