



AT THE FOREFRONT OF VITICULTURAL INNOVATION

Ponzi Vineyards answers the question of clone for Pinot noir

CLONAL MASSALE

A hybrid of clonal selection and massale selection, where over 25 clones of Pinot noir, selected for a specific site, are mixed and planted randomly in a single block. This technique has evolved over two generations with four decades of evaluation and experience working with many different clones. Ponzi Vineyards now has over 30 acres of vines planted to clonal massale.



“Each clone has a personality. When many are combined in a single block, the multitude of characteristics naturally brings complexity and dimension to the wines. By planting these clones at random, like wildflowers, it further relinquishes the question of clone and focuses fully on the terroir of a site.”

—Second generation Winemaker Luisa Ponzi



DECADES OF EXPERIENCE

1975
A two-acre site named Abetina is planted on its own roots to 22 different Pinot noir clones as part of a clonal test site by Oregon State University. Each vine was tagged and tracked to determine which was best suited to the region. In barrel, this mix of clones is a magical combination, making it a perennial standout in the cellar.

2005
Abetina Vineyard is preserved on rootstock and planted at Aurora Vineyard as Abetina 2, maintaining for the long term this outstanding mix of clones. Abetina 2 is at the same elevation, aspect and on the same soil as the original.

1993
Luisa Ponzi returns to the winery after completing her enology and viticulture studies in Burgundy to take the reins as winemaker. Upon her return, 10 acres of Dijon clone Pinot noir (113, 114, 115, 667 and 777) are planted at Aurora Vineyard, experimenting with various rootstocks and vine spacing.

2006
The Pinot noir blocks at Avellana are the first planted fully to clonal massale, 5 of the Dijon clones are blended with the 22 heritage clones from Abetina. Planting continues at this site through 2014. This is the most extensive planting of Pinot noir clones in the United States.



THE WINES

When vintage conditions combine with the wide array of ripeness, flavors, aromatics, textures and structure each clone brings, the wines arrive at a kind of perfect balance. Clones that ripen earlier add forward fruit and soft tannins while those clones that ripen later maintain acidity and structure. While vintages move along a scale of cooler to warmer, balance can be maintained within a single site.