



# ELK COVE

## VINEYARDS

### 2016 Clay Court

**VINTAGE 2016** was a year of unusual weather that led to beautiful fruit at lower than average yields. In spring, an early heat spike meant a very condensed time frame for bloom. This gave us smaller than average berries and clusters and set us on the path for our third early harvest in a row. Thankfully, summer weather was cooler than average, which slowed down ripening and allowed flavor development to catch up to sugar accumulation. Due to our small initial crop estimates, we held off thinning until the last minute to delay ripening and add “hang-time”, an important factor in the development of complex flavors.

We were a little stunned when our first fruit hit the crush-pad in the last days of August, setting a record for our earliest harvest in 40 years. September and October brought relief from the heat with mild evenings and cool nights that allowed for slow, even ripening. We picked fruit that was absolutely pristine and perfectly ripe, at a gradual pace that allowed us to give our full attention to each block and work shorter hours than in a typical harvest season.

We are optimistic that 2016 will be an outstanding vintage, reminiscent of 2012 and 2014, with wines that show great balance and concentration.

**VINEYARD:** Clay Court sits atop a picturesque hillside in the Parrett Mountain zone of the Chehalem Mountains AVA. This 15 acre all-Pinot-Noir vineyard was planted in 2001 with the classic Pommard and modern Dijon 115 and 777 clones of Pinot Noir. Clay Court was purchased by Elk Cove in 2009 and is the home of founders Joe and Pat Campbell – and their beloved tennis court! With gentle east-facing slopes, dark red Jory clay soils, and a proven track-record for producing high-quality Pinot Noirs, Clay Court Vineyard was immediately a great addition to Elk Cove’s estate vineyards.

**WINEMAKING:** All of Elk Cove’s delicate Pinot Noir fruit undergoes the same gentle handling through our gravity flow system. This allows us to achieve the elegance, texture and luscious quality that are the hallmarks of exquisite Pinot Noir.

Clay Court Pinot Noir fruit is fermented in small, temperature controlled steel tanks, hand punched down twice daily then aged for ten months in 40% new French oak. Our winemaking team then carefully blends the barrels most representative of the spicy flavors and concentrated red cherry fruit that characterizes this vineyard.

**TASTING NOTES:** This wine opens with aromas of pie cherry, pinesap and wet bark. Red fruited with a clay minerality, the purity of fruit on the palate evokes ripe red strawberry and raspberry tea with a backbone of smooth tannins and a graceful, flinty char.

#### VITICULTURE & ENOLOGY:

Vine Age: 15 years  
Harvest Sugars: 24 brix  
Vatting: Fermentation in small open top steel fermentors.  
10 months in French oak.  
pH: 3.44  
TA: 8.7  
Alc: 13.5 v/v  
Bottled August 2017  
Cases Produced: 748



*Pinot Noir grapes at Elk Cove*