



Background—The origins of this wine can be traced to the 2nd year of the International Pinot Noir Celebration in July 1988. Josef Becker was doling out tiny amounts of his 1976 Spätburgunder Trockenberenauslese, which Michael Adelsheim was lucky enough to taste. Since it had always bothered Michael that we didn't have a wine to serve at the end of our winery dinners, he dreamed we could produce our own version, by freezing the grapes after picking to produce a faux Ice Wine. Finally, in 2001, with an unexpected crop on some grafted Pinot noir vines, we made an experimental batch of such a wine. It was delicious. And so, we've continued.

Growing Season—The 2003 vintage was almost ideal for this project. Everything was “normal” through set...a rainy winter, bud-break Easter, and set in mid-June. The beautiful weather at that time brought about a more than bountiful crop, so we had to go through all the vineyards twice to cut the crop load down to where we could get intense juice. Then the last two months of summer turned quite warm, all the way through harvest. Thus, all the grapes for this wine were picked under sunny skies on October 3, three days before the first of the fall rains.

Vineyards—The grapes for this wine were grown at Ribbon Springs Vineyard. Since the goal was to get the ripest possible grapes for this wine, we chose the warmest section of this 49-acre Pinot noir site. As a result, the 3.26 tons of Pinot noir grapes destined for this wine averaged 27° Brix at picking.

Winemaking—After the grapes were picked, they were quickly trucked to a cold-storage facility and frozen. Then in late October - a couple weeks after things had calmed down from harvest - they were brought back to our winery and allowed to partially thaw (so we could actually “press” them.) We dumped them into our 1500L bag press to gently separate the juice from both the skins and the ice. This increased the sugar concentration in the pressed juice; this year, it got to 39° Brix, which gave us the potential for quite a sweet wine indeed. Winemaker Dave Paige used cultured yeast for an especially cold fermentation, which lasted about a month, and then he dropped the temperature even lower to put an end to yeast activity. The wine was bottled in January, showing a final residual sugar level of 17%

The Wine—The grapes were pressed just hard enough to achieve a lovely salmon color, while keeping any harsh tannins from ending up in the juice. By retaining most of the grapes' natural acidity, Dave assured that the wine would not become too cloying. There is a rich apricot/fig quality to the flavors, and those flavors linger and linger. This Deglacé would be perfect with any semi-sweet fruit dessert, from fresh seasonal berries to fruit sorbets to apple tarts, or a selection of chocolate truffles.

The Label—The label is a simple drawing of the vineyard at our winery, showing the block from which we first produced our Deglacé in 2001. It is by Portland artist Bob Bredemeier. The name “Deglacé” deserves an explanation. Given the production method for the wine, we wanted a French word for defrost, but the correct word, “dégivrez”, didn't get a lot of salutes. “Glacer” means to freeze, so we figured something that was thawed should be called “Deglacé”, at least in our dictionary!

Production—We produced 285 cases of 12/375 ml bottles of the 2003 Deglacé Pinot noir.