

# Planting the New Vineyard Block

Hi Jean - It was good to see you during our planting of our newest, and first block since 1983, of Chardonnay. Thank you for taking pictures of this new vineyard planting on our farm - we haven't planted a new vineyard block for over 20 years so that day was a special one for me and I appreciate your great photos to help record the farm event. A little history about these baby vines:

In 1983 I helped plant the mother vines of these little vines in the vineyard blocks located west behind my home. In the mid-90s most vineyard owners were pulling out or grafting over to Pinot noir this clone of Chardonnay (108) due to perceived lack of ripening or flavor. Mom and Dad did, too. But our block of Chardonnay behind my house only 2/3 of the graft took so they decided that rather than replant or regraft they would let the Chardonnay coexist with the Pinot noir and so we now farm an unusual (for Oregon) 3.5 acres of Chardonnay and Pinot noir interspersed with each other. Easy to do! Same pruning, same trellis management, same organic spray and it's easy at harvest to discern the Pinot (dark blue) from the Chardonnay (yeah, golden white) for my picking crew that's been with us for 30 years. The Pinot always gets harvested first - following the rest of our Pinot blocks - and this Chardonnay clone loves to hang on and on - through sun and rain - developing flavors special to it's clone until we pick it - the last to be harvested on the farm.

About these baby vines: Knowing two years ago we needed to replant a particular vineyard block adjacent to the family farm house - across from the Red Barn tasting room - we pulled out an acre of vines and let the land lay fallow for a year. Before Harvest 2016 Esmeralda and I went into the 30-year-old Chardonnay block and flagged the Chardonnay for cuttings in the winter. Vines were pruned in February, 2015 and in the following March she and I went in and took canes from the vines to cut into 16" lengths which Steven and I then took to Countryside Nursery in Aurora (excellent caretakers of vines) for grafting this Chardonnay onto phylloxera resistant rootstock. One year later - March 2016 - we picked up these baby vines and with the help from Stirling Fox's crew we planted it on the day you visited the farm.

After helping plant our vineyards since 1970 I didn't think I would be so excited as I am about planting another vineyard block on the farm but I am so happy and proud of this new vineyard on our farm. Mother vines are right behind my home, baby vines are just two blocks below and the plants are hardy, healthy, and vigorous. We hand water these babies every week - the big John Deere pulling the 400 gallon water tank on an old wooden trailer we've used for years and whether it's Jimmy and I or Mario and Isidra doing the watering honors these plants get plenty of water. April has been very dry so just finished second watering this week - and it's only mid-April. (This might be a weekly responsibility through summer but better frequently than not.)

And, last, but another reason this has become my favorite vineyard (sorry, blocks planted in 1970) is the wildflowers I planted at the ends of each of these new rows. I made wells of soil to hold the water I bring down in 15 one-gallon containers and given that these newly emerging flower seedlings require frequent watering between infrequent rains I am down at this block, well, frequently. I hope by mid-May to see flowers against the tender green shoots of the baby Chardonnay. I am an optimist!

I hope you come out soon, again. I have some pictures of our style of hand watering and it's a scenic view of the big, green tractor, the old wooden trailer and the pristine white water tank with the two of us following behind with water hoses. You'd probably take better pictures though!

Thanks, again, for making it out to the farm for that day. Hugs, Martha

























Phew! All done.



