

## Anatoli Levine (Talk-A-Vino) – One on One with Winemaker Wayne Bailey

September 30, 2016

- 1. Your first vineyards were planted on Youngberg Hill in 1989. How much did you have to change between then and now?** Those 11 acres continue to produce and are healthier now than 14 years ago as a result of switching to organic and biodynamic farming practices. We have planted four additional acres of Pinot Noir in 2008 and five acres of Pinot Gris in 2006. In 2014 we grafted over half of the Pinot Gris to Chardonnay.
- 2. 1996 was the first vintage at Youngberg Hill. Have you had an opportunity to taste those wines?** Yes. The only vintage I have not had was the 1997. I had a few bottles of '96, '98', '99 that were part of our purchase. What do you think of them? They were very good and reflected both the quality of the fruit coming off the hill and the ageability of the wines. Are there any of those wines still around? I have 1 bottle of '98 and a few 2000, etc.
- 3. Your first vintage was in 2003. How are those wines aging?** Only, have a few bottles left, but had one only a couple of months ago that was beautiful. Aging very well and was still not showing signs of deterioration.
- 4. You produce Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris from Youngberg Hill vineyards, and Chardonnay is on the way. Do you have plans for any other grapes (Tempranillo, Syrah,...)?** No, I am not convinced that we will see global warming impact us to the extent that we can consistently ripen big red varietals in my lifetime. That will be up to my daughters.
- 5. Do you have any plans to expand plantings beyond the 20 acres you have right now?** No
- 6. You went from traditional (whatever it was) farming to organic and now to biodynamic. How those transitions manifest themselves in wines? Can you taste them?** Yes. The fruit is much healthier coming out of the vineyard and into the winery, meaning that the fruit is much more balanced and more balanced ripening of the fruit across all parameters of ripeness. That shows up in the wine as higher quality (depth and complexity and balance) and more vibrancy as the wine ages in the bottle.
- 7. Is the day in the life of biodynamic farmer much different from the "traditional" one?** Yes, in that you spend more time walking the vineyards and knowing each plant more intimately.
- 8. Is going all the way to biodynamic worth the effort for the grapes and wines, or is it just better for the farmer's soul and the environment?** All of the above. You grow healthier grapes which are of higher quality, resulting in better wines. At the same time the soil and plants are healthier and will sustain better in the long run and there is no negative effects to the environment.

9. **Youngberg Hill might be the only winery (to my knowledge) producing Pinot Noir Port. How traditional is your Port in making and style? Would you compare it to any of the Porto wines? Do Pinot Noir grapes accumulate enough sugar to be made into the Port? Lastly, do you produce Port every year?** Our Pinot Port is slightly lighter in overall structure and a little drier, not because there was not enough sugar accumulation, but because I let primary fermentation go a little longer. The production process is the same and the style is similar except for the varietal characteristics. We do not produce every year. It depends on many factors related to the vintage.
10. **What were your most favorite and most difficult vintages at Youngberg Hill and why?** Of past vintages, 2005 and 2010 are two of my favorites for their balance, elegance, and complexity. However, 2005 was significantly reduced in quantity due to mildew; and 2010 was greatly reduced in yield due to the birds. 2015 may become my best vintage to date (currently in barrel).
11. **When the Youngberg Hill is called a “good hill”, is this more of a gut feeling, or is it more of a specific terroir parameters – soil, climate, wind, temperature range etc.** Both. It is good from the standpoint that the terroir is excellent for growing Pinot Noir; higher altitude, marine sedimentary and basalt soils, southeast facing slope, altitude change from 500 to 800 feet, coastal breezes coming off the coast, cooler temperatures both day and night, etc. but also the peace, serenity, isolation, aquifer, underground water, and much more “natural” setting also attribute to the “good hill”.
12. **As a biodynamic farmer I presume you are well attuned with Mother Nature. From 2003 to now, do you see the material effects of the climate change? Do you take this into account with the grape growing and wine production?** Having been in agriculture throughout my life, I have experienced the 20 year cycle of hot and colder temperatures, so I believe in another couple of years we will see temperatures going down again. However, over the long term (hundreds and thousands of years) the earth is getting warmer and the highs and lows are tending to be more extreme along with weather incidents. Does it impact my grape growing practices? No.